



VANGUARD VOICE

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Brigade Commander
COL Lou Lartigue

Public Affairs Officer
CPT Tiffany M. Collins

Editor/Layout Design
SSG Tanya Thomas

Special Contributors
Matthew Burrell
SGT Robert Schaffner
SPC Gary Silverman
PFC Daneille Hendrix

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On the Cover



Spc. Aaron Fletcher (left), with the 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, assists a 7th Iraqi Army Division Soldier on the proper prone firing position Jan. 3 during a training exercise at Al Asad, Iraq.
 (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)

Our strength is because of your sacrifice

Army Strong! This is more than a slogan and I hope it speaks something to you like it does for me. Being "strong" means and does a lot for individuals and groups. These past few months, it's something we have talked about in the brigade and it comes at a perfect time.

I'd like to talk about how we are, and what makes us -- strong. For each of us, we reach back to different motivations and experiences for our individual strength. Something we experienced, something we value, something we want. When times are tough, like during a deployment or personal trial, we rely on our ability to resist strain, maintain our power, and drive on. Throughout our time here, there have been fantastic examples of individual strength in all of us. Each time we persevere, we don't merely just survive, but become stronger. Realize it or not, your individual strength has brought you here today, to read this letter. Thinking about what makes you and those around you strong is meaningful and part of not just making it through, but succeeding.

Groups have strength also. It is made up in part by the strength of its members, but it is also forged by the shared common experience of hardship and success. Our groups (units) are stronger because of our shared focus on this mission, in these deployed conditions. The daily effort a team makes to get a job done right, builds its strength. This goes for a Family group also. Each of us is part of a Family that relies on, and builds on, our strength. Families that share the challenges of this deployed experience contribute to their strength and use it to make it through.

The Army experience is not a temporary strength building experience—it is a lifelong one. Volunteering to serve at a time of war, and again to deploy, you (and your Families) are citizens of the highest order who have contributed your service to our Nation and our Army. For this you are forever members of a special, warrior class. One that is stronger because of your sacrifice.

We are succeeding in our mission because we are strong. Together we have approached this year with vigor of action and focus of purpose. In whatever role you play for this team, here or at home, you are part of our strength and success. In these few remaining months we will leverage and build on this strength to complete our mission for our nation and ourselves, and return home with honor. We are proud of you and thank you for what you do, every day.

COL Lou Lartigue
Commander
4th Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division



COL LOU LARTIGUE



CSM JOE ALTMAN



ABOVE: An Iraqi Police officer distributes items to children in Hamdiyah, Iraq, during a combined humanitarian assistance operation with 3rd Bn., 15th Inf. Regt. Soldiers, Jan. 8.

LEFT: An Iraqi police officer and 2nd Lt. Wendel Friedl, with the 3rd Bn., 15th Inf. Regt., unload bags of rice and lentils during a humanitarian assistance mission in Hamdiyah, Iraq, Jan. 8. The food, as well as blankets and space heaters were distributed to displaced Iraqi families who now reside in Hamdiyah. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)

3-15 Infantry, IP provide for families in need

Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

HAMDIYAH, Iraq – Violence in Iraq has caused several thousand citizens to flee their hometowns. Many left behind the only place they’ve ever known to save their lives and to protect the lives of their families. Some Iraqis left the country entirely and others scouted out safer regions within the country with hope that they can live peacefully in their native land.

About 50 internally displaced Iraqi families now reside in Hamdiyah, and the local Iraqi Police, with the assistance of U.S. Soldiers assigned to D Company, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, are helping to support these citizens as well as families of fallen Iraqi police officers who also live in the area. The combined forces conducted humanitarian assistance efforts in a Hamdiyah village Jan. 8, distributing hundreds of bags of rice, lentils and blankets, as well as space heaters, cooking oil to those in need, and even handed out stuffed animals to the local children.

Captain Edward Goldner, commander of D Co., attended the event. He said that he and his Soldiers work with the Hamdiyah Iraqi Police on a frequent basis –

training their counterparts to work independently once the U.S. Soldiers completely withdraw from Iraq. He said he is confident that the IP will be able to conduct humanitarian assistance missions solely in the future.

“The Hamdiyah IP chief, Lt. Col. Juma, has an excellent working relationship with the city council representative for the area,” said Goldner. “These two leaders have a clear understanding of how to work together to execute an aid mission on their own.” Aside from providing security at the event, Goldner’s troops mostly interacted with the local residents and looked on as the Hamdiyah police led the seemingly smooth humanitarian assistance operation.

“The Hamdiyah IP are competent and capable of providing security for an event like this in the future,” Goldner said.

Helping to prevent violence in Hamdiyah, the Iraqi police also handed out TIP cards – phone numbers to call to report criminal activity- as an avenue toward a more safe, secure, and stable Iraq.

“Helping the citizens gives them hope that democracy can be successful, and helps them believe in the ISF,” said Goldner. “It’s only with a combined effort between the citizens and the ISF that peace will be maintained in the country.”

Soldiers find worthy causes in Al Anbar

3-7 Infantry delivers school desks to Muhammadi, Iraq

Matthew Burrell
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

MUHAMMADI, Iraq—Soldiers with 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, facilitated the delivery of 80 desks to students of the Athathib School Jan. 5 in Muhammadi, Iraq.

The delivery was in conjunction with the Commanders’ Small Scale Projects fund during Operation New Dawn. The CSSP, a subset of the Commanders’ Emergency Response Program, offers more flexibility than its predecessor, which can take up to three weeks to be approved. The CSSP authorizes a subordinate command battalion to execute projects costing up to \$5,000 without command approval.

Each subordinate battalion is authorized to draw, and keep on-hand, up to \$50,000 in CSSP funds. The humanitarian purchases must follow the same rules as CERP projects, but allow the battalion to react to civil vulnerabilities that

could affect the overall security in the area. It provides timely and effective means of reaching out to the local populace.

While Company B, 3rd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt. provided the funding and logistical support for the Jan. 5 mission, the Iraqis provided everything else, including security at the school.

“The Iraqis have done a good job providing security at these sites,” said 1st Lt. Hertier Diakabam, a platoon leader with Company B.

“The humanitarian aid helps out the populace a lot.”

Diakabam said Company B facilitates about two CSSP humanitarian aid drops per month. Local schools and government centers that have been identified for need are the recipients of the aid. In most cases, the aid comes in the form of food provisions.

The last drop, to the Women’s Association of Hit in late December, highlighted the progress the Iraqi Security Forces have made

when planning and executing humanitarian aid. They delivered sewing machines to the Women’s Association, and residents of the city were allowed to come in and use the machines to repair blankets and clothes.

Staff Sergeant Stephen Couto, effects noncommissioned officer with Company B, 3rd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt. said he supports about 10-15 projects per month and, by now, the Iraqis have things well under control.

As the U.S. military presence draws down in Iraq, it is important that the Iraqis take a larger role in the execution of humanitarian aid missions like the CSSP. So far, the Iraqis are doing exactly that.

Captain Devin Hammond, commander of Company B, 3rd Bn., 7th Inf., Regt., whose first tour to Iraq was in 2005, said he has seen the kind of growth the Iraqis have undergone firsthand. Not so long ago, the roles were reversed.

“During my first tour, we provided security for the ISF on these (humanitarian aid) drops,” he said. “Now, the ISF looks out for us.”



Desks are unloaded Jan. 5 at the Athathib School during a humanitarian aid mission conducted by members of the Iraqi Security Forces and Soldiers 3rd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt. (Photo by Matthew Burrell)

Medical personnel
help Iraqi doctors

Treat trauma

Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

CAMP ALI, Iraq—Dr. Ahmed Abdul Aziz and his staff treat about 400 patients per day at the Al Ramadi General Hospital.

“Some patients come in for an illness, but most are trauma victims,” he said.

Faced with a shortage of medical equipment, and therefore a high mortality rate, Aziz and about 20 Iraqi doctors learned alternative methods to treat their patients—and ultimately help save lives—Jan. 26-27 during a training course taught by United States Division – Center medical personnel at Camp Ali, Iraq.

“They care about their patients, but they just couldn’t take care of them with the lack of equipment,” said Capt. Amy Rezak, trauma surgeon with the 402nd Forward Surgical Team, attached to the 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, and a Boston

native. “But, there are simple treatments that can be done that don’t require fancy medical equipment.”

Rezak and about five other 4th AAB surgeons and physicians taught the Iraqi doctors valuable lifesaving skills through lectures and hands-on stations during the two-day class. Rezak, an Army Reserve Soldier who teaches surgery at Harvard University, said she developed this course because she wanted to provide Iraqi doctors with the same knowledge as the students she teaches back home.

“I thought maybe we could do the same thing here,” she said. “Hold some courses and hopefully benefit their trauma patients, and at the same time, possibly learn from their experiences.”

The Iraqi doctors practiced critical skills like suturing, placement of chest tubes, management of airways, radiology and ultrasound.

“We had a great turnout,” said Capt. Joseph Roarty, surgeon with 4th AAB, and an instructor of the

Iraqi trauma course.

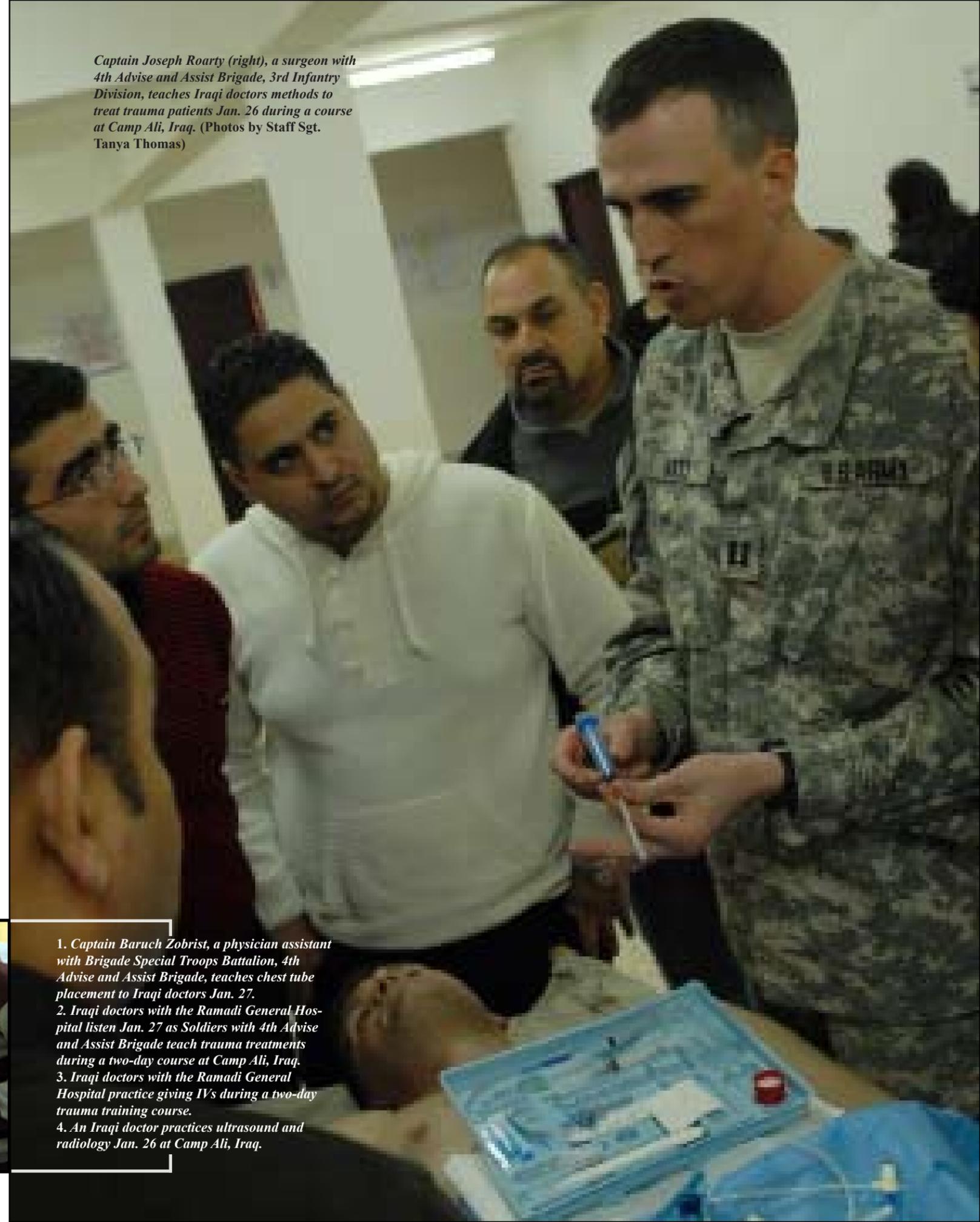
“They were very enthusiastic and appreciative of this training. Although violence has decreased (in Iraq) they deal with, on a daily basis, victims from not only violent attacks but also incidents like car accidents and it’s very important for them to be able to handle these skills. We hope that this training helps them with their care for their patients.”

Roarty said he also hopes the Iraqi doctors take this knowledge and pass it on to the next generation of doctors.

“I think that’s the best gift that we can give the country of Iraq,” Roarty said.

“Our mission here in Iraq is to help the future sustainability of the country, so I think that events like this, that bring physicians together and give them knowledge and skills they can build on and share with others is something ultimately sustainable for them. I’m personally dedicated to that.”

Captain Joseph Roarty (right), a surgeon with 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, teaches Iraqi doctors methods to treat trauma patients Jan. 26 during a course at Camp Ali, Iraq. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)



*1. Captain Baruch Zobrist, a physician assistant with Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, teaches chest tube placement to Iraqi doctors Jan. 27.
2. Iraqi doctors with the Ramadi General Hospital listen Jan. 27 as Soldiers with 4th Advise and Assist Brigade teach trauma treatments during a two-day course at Camp Ali, Iraq.
3. Iraqi doctors with the Ramadi General Hospital practice giving IVs during a two-day trauma training course.
4. An Iraqi doctor practices ultrasound and radiology Jan. 26 at Camp Ali, Iraq.*



Down n' Dirty

442 Military Police train in all terrain

Soldiers assigned to the 442nd Military Police Company, New York National Guard, attached to the 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, practice evacuating a casualty at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, Feb. 16. (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)



Staff Brig. Gen. Ismael Shibab Mohammed, commanding general of the 7th Iraqi Army Division, observes Iraqi Soldiers training with U.S. advisers with the 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division Jan. 3 at Al Asad, Iraq. (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)



An Iraqi Army leader briefs his soldiers before participating in a mortar training exercise as part of Tadreeb al Shamil, at Al Asad, Iraq, Feb. 13. (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)

U.S. Troops advise 7th Iraqi Army Division soldiers on conventional warfare tactics during Operation

Tadreeb al Shamil

On the morning of Jan. 3, Soldiers with 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment - attached to 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division - and Soldiers with the 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, were greeted in the western desert of Iraq by a more professional Iraqi Army than many of them had ever seen.

Matthew Burrell
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

AL ASAD, Iraq—It was the first day of a three-week conventional warfare training course for the 2-28 Infantry Battalion, 7th Iraqi Army Division, and the platoons were formed—“dress-right-dress”—on the dilapidated road leading out from their logistical support area.

The training, dubbed Operation Tadreeb al Shamil, which focused on basic Soldiering tasks like rifle marksmanship, first aid, treating a casualty, weapons familiarization surviving the elements, marked a significant shift in doctrine during Operation New Dawn.

Nationwide, Iraqi infantry divisions are pulling battalion-size elements off the line for conventional warfare training—the first time since the beginning of

Operation Iraqi Freedom—at Iraq’s version of the U.S. Army’s National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.

“People underestimate the Iraqi Army,” said Maj. Darren Keahtigh, operations officer with 4/10 Cav. “This unit has been in contact with the enemy for the past four years and have been pulled off and reconfigured into an infantry battalion and now they are ready to train.”

Keahtigh may as well have been speaking about all the Iraqi line units serving in the towns and cities, frontiers and borders and streets and checkpoints, because soon they will all go through the three-week conventional warfare training, which is meant to be an enduring training task, even after the last of U.S. forces have left Iraq.

In all, between Iraqi Soldiers and U.S. advisers, more than 800 people participated in the training.

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This was a significantly larger training cycle than the U.S. advisers had worked with before, but they were up to the task.

“Iraqi Security Forces need to be able to train themselves,” said 1st Lt. David Fink. “Today, our lane is medical. So U.S. medics will pair up and teach first aid and treating a casualty.”

The original plan called for U.S. advisers to train only the Iraqi officers, who would then train the Iraqi Army line troops, but that didn’t evolve as planned.

“They expressed interest in conducting the training themselves,” said Sgt. Lucas Garcia, a medical adviser with 4/10 Cav. “We will stand by to advise and assist and help out when they request it.”

The Iraqis identified Soldiers and officers who were proficient and designated them as trainers and instructors. The U.S. Soldiers present would serve as mentors and advisers during the training.

“It’s a nice change and we understand the importance of the mission,” said 1st Lt. Will Swearingen, with 4/10 Cav.

During the medical training, the Iraqi Soldiers split into two groups—one doing first aid training, the other treating a casualty and applying a tourniquet. Iraqi medical trainers taught the Iraqi Soldiers about basic first aid, such as evaluating a casualty, checking for bleeding and internal injuries and applying a pressure dressing. In another tent, U.S. advisers demonstrated the proper application of a tourniquet in a combat environment. After the training session in each tent was completed, the groups rotated.

That afternoon, the Iraqi troops rotated lanes and began zeroing and qualifying with the M-16 rifle. For many of the Iraqi Soldiers, it was their first time firing an M-16. This was the training with which the Iraqis would need the most assistance from their U.S. counterparts.

Swearingen said zeroing the weapons was the main focus of the range. Getting the Iraqis to perform mechanical zero on their weapons would prove to be challenging.

TOP: A Soldier with the 7th IA Div. demonstrates pre-maintenance inspection procedures on the PKC machine gun Jan. 3. (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)

CENTER: Soldiers with 2nd Battalion, 28th Brigade, 7th IA Div. line up to receive ammunition Jan. 22 before participating in a live-fire exercise facilitated by Soldiers with 4/3 AAB. The live-fire culminated a monthlong training course. (Photo by Pfc. Daneille Hendrix)

BOTTOM: A Soldier with the 7th IA Div. loads a PKC machine gun at Jan. 4 Camp Al Asad, Iraq. (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)

“Most of the Iraqis were used to the AK-47, which is a durable, but inaccurate weapon,” he said. “Accuracy isn’t the hallmark of the AK-47.”

Many of the Iraqi Soldiers needed time to adjust to the more accurate and technical M-16.

“They understand we use the M-16, but they just don’t understand the intricacies of it,” said 1st Sgt. Matthew Dilcher, first sergeant of C Troop, 4/10 Cav. “They don’t understand that if you mechanically zero first, you will hit the paper every time.”

It became something of a competition between the Iraqis—becoming the first Soldier to zero. The commander of one Iraqi Army company even offered five days of vacation to the winner to make it more inter-

esting.

It didn’t take long after the offer for the first Iraqi Soldier to qualify.

“We paired up with the Iraqi shooters,” Dilcher said. “The Iraqis immediately tightened their shot groups.”

It was clear from the first day this was not the Iraqi Army of four or five years ago.

“They seem a lot more professional,” said 1st Sgt. Kenneth Poss.

Many of the U.S. Soldiers are serving on their second, third or fourth deployments. They have had extensive training and operational experience side-by-side with the Iraqis.



A Soldier with the 7th Iraqi Army Division crawls through a tunnel Jan. 4 on a grenade assault course at Camp Al Asad, Iraq. The 7th IA Div. conducted Soldier familiarization training with the assistance of Soldiers with the 4th “Black Jack” Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, and the 3rd Battalion 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)

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While most of the U.S. advisers agree that the members of the Iraqi Security Forces are competent in providing security, manning checkpoints, cordon-and-sweep operations and counterinsurgency operations, they also admit that the Iraqi Soldiers have very little training in conventional warfare.

“All we’ve ever trained them on is counterintelligence,” Poss said. “You know, cordon-and-sweep, kicking in doors; those types of things. This is the first time they’ve had battalion-sized elements training on conventional warfare.”

The Iraqi commanders implored their Soldiers to take the training very seriously. Staff Brig. Gen. Ismael Shibab Mohammed, commanding general of the 7th IA Div., roused the Soldiers with a fiery speech prior to the training.

“I told them they should be lions—even when they train,” he said.

Mohammed said the battalion was selected for training because they are active in providing security and counterterrorism operations. In fact, they have battled al-Qaeda in Iraq since 2006.

“For the past five years the 7th (IA) Div. has battled Al Qaeda in Iraq,” he said. “They have established a government where there was none. They have established a civil defense.”

Mohammed said the time has come to move on to the next phase of training—conventional warfare. Each battalion of the 7th IA Div. will rotate through the monthlong training—an important step in modernization of the Iraqi Army.

As the mission winds down in Iraq, it is essential for U.S. advisers to provide technical support in conventional warfare training for the ISF. The Soldiers with 4/10 Cav. are some of the most seasoned and experienced advisers in the country. Before moving to Al Asad, they were stationed in Mason, near the volatile Iraq-Iran border. For the past four months, they had been partnered with the Iraqi Department of Border Defense.

“We were teaching them how to patrol, anti-smuggling operations, checkpoints and vehicle searches,” said Fink.

The first Tadreeb al Shamil course ended late January, and a second rotation of IA Soldiers finished their training at Al Asad last month.

The 4th Advise and Assist Brigade plans to continue Operation TaS throughout their deployment in support of Operation New Dawn.



LEFT: A Soldier with 4/10 Cav., attached to the 4th AAB, shows 7th Iraqi Army Division Soldiers how to adjust sights on the M-16 rifle Jan. 4 during a training exercise at Al Asad, Iraq. (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)

CENTER: Spc. Servando Flores, with 4/10 Cav., shows an Iraqi Soldier with the 7th Iraqi Army Division his shot grouping with the M-16 rifle Jan. 3. (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)

RIGHT: Staff Sgt. Christopher Hjuler (right), with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th AAB, checks an Iraqi soldier's sights on the Iraqi 60 mm mortar system during a training exercise at Al Asad, Iraq, Jan. 17. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)



Iraqi Army soldiers practice squad movement drills during a training exercise at Al Asad, Iraq, Feb. 12. (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)



Specialist Shawn Mason (left), a military police Soldier with HHC, BSTB, 4th AAB teaches Iraqi police officers how to conduct a vehicular search properly Jan. 24 during Scorpion training—a three-day course designed to maintain policing skills for Iraqi police officers. (Photo by Matthew Burrell)

Soldiers help develop Fallujah Iraqi police officers

Matthew Burrell
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq - The Stability Transition Team at Camp Fallujah, Iraq, along with the aid of military police Soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, conducted “Scorpion” training recently for Iraqi Police officers from the Fallujah, Gharmah and Ameriyah districts.

Scorpion training is a three-day crash course in basic policing functions—police investigative techniques, vehicular searches, crime scene preservation and professional ethics. The bi-weekly course at Camp Fallujah is designed to build IP proficiency and professionalism, augmenting the training most IP officers in the province will undergo at the Anbar Training Center in Habbaniyah, Iraq.

“This training is strictly for the (Iraqi Police officers),” said Maj. John Jeffrey, IP adviser with the STT, 4th AAB. “What we’re trying to do is develop IP primacy within the districts.”

The first day of the course is spent in the classroom, U.S. police advisers explain how to conduct a vehicular search properly and cordon off a crime scene, and demonstrate the types of evidence collection available by forensics analysis.

“One of the objectives of the course is to promote the transition from a testimonial based evidence system to a physical based evidence system,” Jeffrey said. “We want to encourage the use of physical evidence as much as possible.”

At present, IP officers work side-by-side with the Iraqi Army in Fallujah to maintain security in the districts. While they have experience manning checkpoints and reacting to incidents, many of the IP officers in Fallujah have

little in the way of professional police training. Many were a part of the Sons of Iraq, which fought Al Qaeda earlier in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005, but for IP primacy to develop they must undergo police proficiency and professionalism training. However, it is difficult for district police commanders to pull their men off the line for lengthy periods to attend police proficiency and professionalism training at the Anbar Training Center in Habbaniyah.

“We want to rotate as many officers as we can through this training before they go to Habbaniyah,” Jeffrey said. “This is sustainment training. It is meant to keep these officers alive in the field before they get sent to the ATC”

During the latter part of the training, U.S. advisers conducted simulation field exercises with the IP officers. The officers were divided into teams of three and four and learned the proper way

to perform a vehicular search, apprehend and search a suspect and react to an attack.

“The goal is to minimize the amount of weapons going through the city,” said Spc. Shawn Mason, a military police trainer with HHC, BSTB, as he spoke to the IP officers in attendance, “and to try and make your communities a little safer.”

The final day of the training was devoted to tactical operations. Teams of Iraqi Police officers cleared rooms in an exercise that simulated a hostile situation that could also have civilian bystanders. The U.S. advisers gave instruction on how to scan the room, the importance of announcing yourself as a police officer and dealing with the possible threats inside the room.

The IP went through the drill several times to gain familiarity with the simulation. They then graduated during a ceremony, receiving a certificate verifying the training completion.

Vanguard Soldiers, ISF work to target, eliminate threats in Al Anbar province

Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

Since July, U.S. Soldiers in Al Anbar, Iraq, have been advising, training and assisting their Iraqi Security Forces counterparts in an effort to help eliminate terrorism in the area and ensure a more secure, stable and sovereign Iraq. Leaders from the combined forces met Jan. 25 at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, to discuss combating one of Iraq’s biggest threats—improvised explosive devices.

The meeting—a counter-IED working group that invites Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army leaders who specialize in criminal investigation and evidence collection, explosive ordnance disposal and intelligence—has become a monthly event. Originally an American-led initiative, the working group has transformed into a venue for the elements of the ISF to work together to achieve their overall goals.

“The ISF are taking the lead here,” said Lt. Col. George Lewis, commander of Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Lewis said the IP and IA leaders have graduated from listening to the American Soldiers, who once facilitated the meeting, to now openly discussing issues like targeting terrorists and attacking the network amongst themselves. “We are seeing considerable progress from our perspective,” Lewis said.

Major Todd Booth, executive officer of BSTB, 4th AAB, said he’s impressed with the improvements of his ISF counterparts.

“What we have seen is the Iraqis’ willingness to take the lead to discuss the issues they were having and work to try and resolve them,” he said.

“One of our critical tasks for the way ahead is to get the Iraqi Police and the Iraqi Army talking and working together. I think we’ve been successful in doing that and

building relationships since July.

“Ultimately these relationships and communications we’ve built through this meeting will assist with carrying that task through, so that as we leave Iraq, the Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army know each other and can work together without any U.S. facilitation,” Booth said.

Iraqi Police Colonel Sa’ad Mohammed, commander of the Al Anbar Criminal Investigation Department, said attending these working groups is very beneficial to their mission.

“These kinds of meetings are very important to me,” Sa’ad said. “Through these kinds of meetings, everybody—the police and the army—will know what their duties are for this fight against terrorist threats. Actually, every meeting there has been some development. It’s a slow process, but we’ve progressed with each meeting.”

Sa’ad said though there are differences between the police and the army, they both share common ground—their willingness to defeat the enemy.

“We are all passionate about our work, and will do anything, even put ourselves in harm’s way, or even die to help eliminate the terror in our community,” he said.



Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Decker (right), Anbar operations officer and stability transition team member with 4th AAB, meets with a leader of the 7th Iraqi Army Division Jan. 25 during a combined counter-improvised explosive device working group session. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)

Engineers conduct route clearance with ISF

Matthew Burrell
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq — The grounds of Camp Fallujah, located on the outskirts of the city hotly contested during Operation Iraqi Freedom, is garrison to the 1st Iraqi Army Infantry Division and home to a small contingent of U.S. Army combat engineers with the 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division—all that remains of the U.S. presence through the ongoing transition to Iraqi self-sufficiency.

Since the beginning of Operation New Dawn, the security of the province has fallen on the shoulders of the Iraqi Security Forces, which have performed admirably against the last remnants of al-Qaeda in Iraq. That's not to say U.S. soldiers don't have a role in the security of Fallujah.

For the engineers are often called at Camp Fallujah, their job in Iraq can still be very dangerous. Their mission is to seek out roadside bombs before the devices can harm anyone.

Recently, they conducted a combined route clearance patrol with the 1st Bomb Disposal Company, 1st Iraqi Army Infantry Division.

"We try to go out with them [multiple times] each week," said 1st Lt. Matt Fletcher, platoon leader with Company A, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th AAB.

Earlier this month, his platoon was hit with an improvised explosive device. Fletcher knows his men must tread carefully and remain vigilant because they are a big target.

"It's not like it used to be," said Staff Sgt. Tony Smith, platoon sergeant with Company A, BSTB.

Smith, who is serving his second deployment in Iraq, spent time in Ramadi in 2005 when al Qaida had a stranglehold on Anbar province.

"We'd get hit two or three times per day sometimes," he said. During Smith's current tour, that's how many times the platoon has been hit in the past six months.

Smith said despite the change in the environment, he understands the importance of doing the right thing while working with the ISF.

"We are now in the training role. We have to assist the Iraqis and make sure everything is good before the mission," Fletcher said.

The ISF are still learning more technical aspects of soldiering, like

proper maintenance, and need a little extra help in those areas, he said.

Before the combined patrol, Maj. Anthony Cole, stability transition team engineer adviser, inspected the Iraqi Humvees before departing Camp Fallujah.

"They've come a long way since I've been here," Cole said. "They are well on their way to being self-sufficient."

Fletcher said one of the goals before his unit redeploys is to make sure the Iraqis are able to maintain their vehicles on their own. Company A has provided support and assistance with parts and maintenance thus far.

During the route clearance mission, the Iraqis spotted an overturned vehicle on the side of the road. Fletcher decided to remain in an advisory role and let the Iraqis handle the situation. Fletcher said while the vehicle turned out not to be a threat, many situations on the road can present challenges, and you never know what to expect.



Soldiers with Company A, BSTB, 4th AAB, 3rd ID, prepare to conduct a combined route clearance patrol—to locate roadside bombs—Jan. 24 with the 1st Bomb Disposal Company, 1st Iraqi Army Infantry Division. (Photo by Matthew Burrell)



Soldiers with Co. B, 3rd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt., 4th AAB, search for suspicious activity Jan. 14 while on patrol outside of Al Asad Air Base, Iraq.

Infantry Soldiers help keep air base safe

Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

AL ASAD, Iraq—"Remember to stay alert. Stay vigilant," said 1st Lt. Matthew McCarthy, after a brief explanation of the day's mission. "It's starting to pick up around here." After belting out a loud "Hooah," acknowledging the mission's requirements, Soldiers with Company B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, donned their personal protective equipment, loaded into their vehicles and set out for their patrol.

But this patrol was unlike those with previous combat experience in Iraq were familiar with. Nonetheless, these infantrymen still play a major role in protecting the lives of thousands of tenants on Al Asad Air Base.

"Our main focus is stability operations, ensuring that service members, civilians and Iraqi Security Forces in and around Al Asad are secure as they operate and train on a daily basis," said Sgt. 1st Class Cody Stowe, a platoon sergeant with Company B.

Stowe explained that his troops conduct patrols around Al Asad Air Base to help prevent any criminal activity.

Moments after the infantrymen started their patrol Jan. 14, one of the troops spotted an individual

loitering around one of the inoperative Russian-made aircraft outside the base. "We've got an individual to your 9 o'clock," said Spc. Christopher Seltreck, as he radioed in the activity to his fellow Soldiers.

The suspect fled as soon as he was noticed. Stowe said that members of the local populace have been taking parts of the aircraft to sell as scrap metal in their community. "So we try to approach the suspected individuals and ask them what they are up to."

Stowe added that his team recently discovered fresh holes in the ground where individuals have dug up wires. He and his Soldiers dismounted their vehicles in search of any fresh activity.

"Anything significant that we find, we report," Stowe said. "We're here to protect ourselves and enable the Iraqi Security Forces as they conduct their training. They deserve the ability to train in a safe environment so they can be fully prepared to take over the mission when we withdraw from Iraq."

With no new findings, the Soldiers continued on their previously planned route until shift change. They searched through vacant bunkers and other surrounding areas and talked with Iraqi Army Soldiers who stand guard at checkpoints outside the FOB.

"It's great to be able to come out here," said Spc. Jason Burdette, with Co. B. "It makes me feel like I'm doing something great for my country."

Workplace safety: *Don't get complacent*

Anthony Woodard
4/3 AAB Safety Officer

Every week the brigade has an average of 48 work/training related injuries. Of those individuals, 35 are placed on light-duty as a result of injuries. The single most common cause is complacency - an attitude that "it won't happen to me."

Too often individuals become complacent when it comes to safety. Supervisors are satisfied with mediocre safety performance and do not work to improve the environment by raising safety awareness and eliminating the potential for injury. Soldiers are content and are not attentive to their work environments. They become convinced that their first line supervisors are not concerned about safety. They begin to think they are not responsible for their own safety. Over time, the entire section gives little meaningful attention to safety.

The result is that Soldiers begin to get in a hurry and take shortcuts on the job. They are more focused on off-duty and getting the job done than getting it done safely. That attitude becomes an organizational norm.

Near misses go unreported. No one wants to take the time to fill out forms and Soldier's don't understand the connection between sharing information and eliminating injuries. Leaders do not pay attention to reports, so they become unimportant. The number of injuries increases and they become more severe. Unfortunately, it often takes a fatal injury to cause everyone to focus on safety. Don't let this happen to your section.

As we continue our mission as an Advise and Assist Brigade, we must also continue to guard against needless accidents.

Leaders, stay engaged on both fronts.

Slips, trips and falls

Falls are the number one leading cause of injury in the workplace. A major cause of falls in the workplace is the use of improper lifting techniques. No matter who or what you may be lifting there are some key points to consider.

- o Assess the situation, plan the lift.
- o Make sure you have a firm footing.
- o Bend your knees, tighten your stomach, and keep your back straight.
- o Make sure you have a good grip on the item or person you're lifting.
- o Lift smoothly. A smooth lift means that you avoid twisting your body, point your feet in the direction you want to go, and push if possible rather than pull.

Cook raises morale at Camp Fallujah

Matt Burrell
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

Succulent shrimp scampi, creamy chicken alfredo, spicy red rice with chicken cutlets—sounds like the menu at a five-star restaurant, right? At Camp Fallujah, Iraq, this is your standard Monday evening meal at the dining facility.

At an isolated forward operating base like Camp Fallujah, one of the biggest challenges facing a commander is maintaining the mental and physical well-being of each soldier. This task becomes a lot easier when the battalion has employed arguably one of the best U.S. Army cooks in Iraq: Sgt. Paul Harris.

"In my 20 years of service, I've never come across a better Army cook," said Lt. Col. Eric Larsen, stability transition team leader with 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. "He's the best."

Harris, head cook with Company E, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th AAB, said he takes his job very seriously. To him, it's not just cooking the next meal—it's a contributing factor in the soldier's morale and the esprit de corps on the base. "The morale is pretty high around here right now," Harris said—an important development with the resident units recovering from the loss of two soldiers just a few months ago.

This loss struck the heart and soul of the company, and canceling that Friday's barbecue became a major consideration. However, Harris had another idea that

would deliver a much needed morale boost to the soldiers — T-bone steaks.

"Before then, we had just been eating regular food," he said. "I knew the Soldiers really looked forward to the Friday evening barbecues."

Harris recognized that the soldiers needed to be together, not alone. He asked the commander to have T-bone steaks delivered to the camp. The commander complied and it was a somber and emotional meal for everyone present.

Harris said no one talked much during dinner. It wasn't until that following Friday that the soldiers began to open up and express their personal feelings. The loss of a fellow comrade is always difficult, but at Camp Fallujah, thanks to the weekly barbecues and the resulting openness of communication, the soldiers are moving past the tragedy.

"Morale took a big hit in September, but we were able to push past it," said 1st Lt. Andrew Boza, STT communications adviser with 4th AAB. "Soldiers are humans and humans need to socialize ... and there is a good amount of socializing that goes on at [Harris'] barbecues."

Harris, whose specialty is grilled lobster tail, has been grilling since he was 9 years old. He credits much of his culinary talent to his mother, a trained five-star chef.

Harris has also expanded the barbecues to Wednesday night and introduced "soul food Sunday." He's constantly improving the dining conditions on the camp by expanding the menu, maintaining a clean kitchen and ensuring the dining area is up to standard, along with the Vanguard morale.



Sgt. Paul Harris, head cook with Company E, 703rd BSB, prepares his specialty - marinated and grilled lobster tail, Jan. 26 at Camp Fallujah, Iraq. (Photo by Matthew Burrell)

Soldier, NCO of Quarter named

Congratulations to the Vanguard Brigade

FY 2011 2nd Quarter NCO and Soldier of the Month



Sgt. Esperanza Ruiz
Company B, 703rd BSB



Spc. Luis Mata
Company A, 703rd BSB

Vanguard Brigade thanks Eagle Scout

The 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division sends a special 'Thanks' to Joshua Steele who helped deliver more than 200 pounds of personal items to Vanguard Soldiers who continue to serve in support of Operation New Dawn. Steele was awarded with a certificate of appreciation during a annual Eagle Scout ceremony in St. Louis, Missouri. He also received a 3rd Inf. Div. patch and a Ranger tab, as a small token of appreciation and motivation for the Eagle Scout to attain his long-term goal of becoming a U.S. Army Ranger. (Courtesy Photo)



DEPLOYED TROOPS CELEBRATE AFRICAN AMERICAN - BLACK HISTORY MONTH



TOP LEFT: Staff Sgt. Alexander Pinckney and Sgt. Erica Boozer, both with the 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, perform a skit during an equal opportunity observance program held in honor of Black History Month at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, Feb. 24. TOP RIGHT: Maj. Frederick Black, guest speaker at Camp Ramadi's 2011 African American/Black History Observance, talks about his family's military history and success, and provides inspiration to 4th AAB Soldiers in honor of Black History Month, Feb. 24. BOTTOM: Pictured are Soldiers with the 4th AAB who took part in this year's African American/Black History Month Observance at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, Feb. 24. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)



Food service specialist serves up smiles to deployed Soldiers

Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq – Hundreds of deployed troops – plus civilian contractors and local national employees – swarm the dining facility at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, every evening, eager to fill their stomachs with a hot meal. But despite what's featured on the night's menu, one Army cook is ensuring that these troops are first fed a healthy smile.

"You just never know what someone may be going through," said Sgt. Cheryl Hamilton, a food service specialist assigned to the Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, as she greeted every person who entered Ramadi Cafe.

Hamilton is responsible for collecting an accurate head-count at dinner and midnight chow, but said it is equally important that she includes a warm welcoming with her daily duties.

"I greet everyone, even though I don't

have to, because sometimes a simple 'Good evening' may be all that someone needs to help brighten up their day," she said.

This is Hamilton's third deployment to Iraq, but this time around she isn't cooking.

"It's a little bit different from what I am used to," she said, "but, now instead of preparing food in the back, I get to see everyone's face and watch them enjoy their meals.

"I am a non-commissioned officer now," she continued, "so my job also includes taking care of my Soldiers."

One such Soldier is Spc. Ebony Hall who says that Hamilton is not only serving up smiles to fellow Soldiers, but she is also a trusted source of strength for many troops who may encounter a lot of stress.

"She's basically helped me to get through this deployment," Hall said of her NCO, adding that Hamilton was there for her when her grandmother passed away one year ago. "She's helped me to get through a lot of things, and has taught me how to trust and be more patient."

Hamilton said she credits her ability to console others to her strong faith in the Lord, and added that it is that same faith that helped her to overcome her own life struggles.

"There's been a time when I seriously struggled; I was even homeless at one point," Hamilton said. "I even experienced racial prejudice in my own house. But you just have to keep moving forward, and work for what you want to achieve."

Hamilton said she is successful now, having joined the Army and strengthening her faith.

"Keep your faith in the Lord," she said. "He will see you through. And there's nothing like service with a smile."



Sgt. Cheryl Hamilton, food service specialist with BSTB, 4/3 AAB, greets servicemembers and civilians who enter the dining facility at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, Jan. 21.



Staff Sgt. Jason Letterman (retired), who was severely injured while serving in Iraq in 2008, cuts the ceremonial ribbon and receives the keys to his new specially-adapted home designed to provide maximum freedom of movement and the ability to live more independently, Feb. 12. A crowd of Soldiers and well wishers, to include guest speaker U.S. Representative of Georgia Jack Kingston, celebrated the record breaking Homes for Our Troops 22-day build. Homes for Our Troops provides specially adapted homes to severely injured veterans at no cost to veterans. (Photos by Sgt. Robert Schaffner)

New home built for wounded warrior

Hinesville community, 3rd ID rallies for Vanguard Soldier

Sgt. Robert Schaffner
4th IBCT Public Affairs

HINESVILLE, Ga. - Hundreds of volunteers made up of community members, Soldiers and contractors turned out on the morning of Jan. 21 to begin construction of a specially-adapted home for one of their own, Staff Sgt. Jason Letterman, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Letterman lost both of his legs in an IED blast in May 2008 when the gun truck he was riding in rolled over a pressure wire, causing an explosion that

threw the vehicle 20 feet into the air. All of the passengers in the vehicle were severely injured; the driver was mortally wounded.

Support for this worthwhile effort was so strong that it has been called the largest build brigade turn out since the organization "Homes for Our Troops" began building homes for seriously-injured servicemembers in 2004. Letterman's home, in Hinesville, is the 86th home to be built by Homes for Our Troops at no cost to the injured servicemember.

"Due to the overwhelming turn out, this is the first time that we have

run out of hats and t-shirts for the volunteers for a 'build brigade,'" said Doreen Lewis, the community outreach coordinator for Homes for Our Troops. The organization refers to the group of volunteers who help build the homes as a "build brigade."

The effects of the massive and enthusiastic volunteer support was witnessed and felt by many, including 3rd Infantry Division senior leaders.

"The cohesion and strength of this outfit is still sky-high, even after seven, eight, nine years of combat and a treadmill of constant deployments – we still got it," said Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, 3rd ID commander, who helped raise the first wall of Staff Sgt. Letterman's home, Jan. 21. "There are no words to describe his Family of 3rd ID Soldiers out here ... it's amazing."

The community-involved weekend, which took place Jan. 21-23, was set in three phases – with a goal each day. On day one, the walls were all standing, roof trusses were set and sheathing the roof began, said Larry Archer, the Homes for Our Troops construction manager for the Letterman home project. On day two, the roof sheathing was completed and shingles were installed and exterior doors and windows were set; on day three, brick was laid around all four sides of the home.

The contractors were not alone on the job every night until almost midnight, preparing the home and ensuring to meet the rigorous schedule.

"Jason has been here at all hours, including every night, shaking every hand and thanking everyone he possibly can," said Steve Will, an assistant project manager for Hardin Construction of Savan-



TOP: Lt. Gen. William Webster, Third Army Commander; 3rd ID Commander Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo; members of Harden Construction and other volunteers raise the first wall for Staff Sgt. (retired) Jason Letterman's new home, Jan. 21.
BOTTOM: Pictured is a specially adapted four-bedroom home in Hinesville's Oak Crest Subdivision built by 3rd ID Soldiers and volunteers under the guidance of Homes For Our Troops for Staff Sgt. Jason Letterman and family. The Letterman home was built in a record 22 days.

nah, the company that volunteered to be the general contractor for the Letterman home. As he spoke, Letterman was sitting in his wheelchair parked on the dark roadway in front of his new home, despite the frigid 30 degree temperature Saturday night.

"Meeting Jason has been a very humbling experience," Will said.

Letterman is thankful for the new home that he, his wife Elena and their three sons Daniel, 12; Nathaniel, 11, and Alexander, 5, will live in, because he now won't have to worry about many of the things most people take for granted.

"It's going to be a huge change now," said Letterman. "I don't have to worry about getting into the bathroom in my house; I won't

have to worry about getting into all the rooms in my house. The counter tops will all be down at my level, so everything will be easier for me. You can't put a price tag on that.

"I think it's unbelievable, in this time, in the state this country is in, that people still want to volunteer and do all the things they're doing for veterans," he continued. "We really, really appreciate it. I can't put into words how huge it is what you're doing for us to make our lives easier."

The house-building project was complete in 22 days, and Letterman and his family received the key to his special adapted new home during a ceremony held in his honor, Feb. 12.

Family Readiness

Traci Wheeler
Vanguard Family Readiness Support Assistant

Hello to all of our Soldiers, Family Members and friends of the Vanguard Brigade!

I want to express our gratitude for all of the support everyone has provided to our Families. We are more than half way through our deployment and preparations are being made for the return of our Soldiers. When our Soldiers re-deploy this summer they will be able to move into our new 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team complex located off of Highway 144. Please stay connected to your Family Readiness Groups for updates.

The brigade will be introducing the eArmy messaging system for our Soldiers and Families. Please be sure to contact your FRSA to update your contact information. This will be the fastest way for us to get information to you in a timely manner.

Our mission is to keep you all informed for the remainder of the deployment. If you have a change to your address or telephone number, please update your FRG Leader.

We want to continue to keep you connected to current and upcoming events. If you are ever in need of assistance, or you are not receiving infor-

mation from the unit, please contact your battalion or squadron Family Readiness Support Assistant immediately.

Also, be sure to check out our FRG updates on the brigade's Facebook page. Here, we update you on the latest events - from Town Hall meetings to holiday cheer for our deployed Soldiers. Log on to www.facebook.com/4th-Brigade-3rd-Infantry-Division.

Thank you again for your continuing support. Remember you are never alone; there is always someone to lend an ear or provide a hug.

	3-7 IN FRSA Stacy Breithaupt	767-0317
	3-15 IN FRSA Johnny Robinson	767-7498
	6-8 CAV FRSA Lisa Partington	767-0143
	1-76 FA FRSA Kimberly Walker	767-4304
	4-3 BSTB FRSA Christi Kisko	767-5370
	703rd BSB FRSA	767-8853
	HHC 4IBCT FRSA Traci Wheeler	767-9310

Legal advice: Help keep yourself out of trouble

Maj. Timothy Litka
4/3 AAB Judge Advocate

As our minds turn to making it through another deployment, you can take these steps to help yourself stay out of trouble.

Your circumstances may have changed. As such, you may need to ask yourself the following: *Should I update my car insurance and registration?; Do I need to review large purchase contracts (such as cars) with Army Community Service or legal assistance?; Do I need to request an extension for filing*

my taxes?; Should I mail home insured mail, my personal property and high value items?; Do I need to update my will?; Do I have copy of my United States Citizen and Immigration Service packet, and have I notified them of my change of address?; Does my P.O.A. terminate? If not, should I revoke it?; If court dates were put on hold before deploying, do I need to check back with the court?

Moreover, in the home stretch, protect yourself from tripping over the criminal statutes that govern our everyday life. Fraternalization,

disrespect, insubordination, dereliction of duty, not taking the hint "no means no," drinking, downloading porn, and keeping prohibited war souvenirs are still criminal offenses. Ignoring these suggestions could lead to you taking home from deployment a letter of reprimand, a UCMJ Article 15, an other-than-honorable discharge, or, if you are really clumsy, a federal conviction.

Remember, you only have a short time left on this deployment. Thinking and planning can help prevent legal issues here and when you return.

Vanguard ministry team combats suicide, trains Soldiers to ASIST

Matthew Burrell
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

AL ASAD, Iraq – In 2008, the suicide rate for servicemen and women reached a record high. After four straight years of increased suicide rates the military decided to do something about the growing epidemic and adopted the ASIST – Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training – program.

The two-day course took place for deployed 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Jan. 6-7.

"This is the most important course you will take in the military," said Staff Sgt. Arthur Woods, 4/3 AAB chaplain assistant noncommissioned officer in charge and brigade ASIST Instructor as he introduced the class. "There is no rank involved in this course."

The notion that Soldiers were participating in a civilian course was reinforced by a requirement that everyone wear name tags. Soldiers addressed officers by their first names and vice versa.

"This is a very important part of the course," said Woods. "When people aren't thinking about rank or the potential consequences, they will be more apt to open up and share with the group."

The course began as Woods introduced some thought-provoking statistics on suicide in the United States.

"Prepare to be shocked," he said.

According to the 2005 statistics, of the 295 million people in the U.S. there were 32,637 reported suicides and an additional five to 25% unreported suicides that year.

The military, however, began to really take note in 2008, the first year

in three decades that servicemen and women exceeded civilian suicides. Woods has been very much involved with ASIST in the military since its inception. He has been teaching ASIST for the Army – in Iraq and stateside – for the past three years. He stresses that this isn't a course in suicide prevention.

"The challenge is to directly intervene in a Soldier's life," explains Woods. "You have to be ready, willing, and able to do this. Would you be ready to save someone's life tomorrow?"

The purpose of the ASIST program is to give the Soldier the tools and resources to be able to successfully engage those in need of help. The rise of servicemen and women committing suicide within the military directly correlates with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The stress of combat weighs heavily on a Soldier who is deployed to a combat zone.

Separation anxiety, workload, combat related stress, and financial problems are some of the tributaries that can lead to greater problems. When these issues pile up, it can lead a Soldier to start having suicidal thoughts.

"Any stress can cause a Soldier to think of suicide," said Woods.

This is the seventh class Woods has taught during his deployment to Iraq. He has taught all the courses in Anbar province. And although he will be teaching classes in Iraq until April, he has already begun to plan for the important re-deployment period the Soldiers of 4/3 AAB will undergo when they return to Fort Stewart.

"We will have classes for the returning Soldiers," explained Woods. "It's like a journey that never ends. It's just saving one Soldier at a time."



Faith in Family

Chaplain (Maj.) Dave Cromeenes
4/3 AAB Chaplain

Faith is the recognition that you are not alone and believing beyond yourself for sustenance, support and personal growth. Families are made up of individuals whose needs can only be met, supported and nurtured by its members. Faith in Family is the ultimate sense of security during periods of uncertainty, challenge and trial. I want to encourage you during this back half of this deployment to maintain faith in your Family.

Whether this is your first or fourth deployment, knowing there are loving Family Members at home and deployed who love you, care about you and long for your presence are vital to strengthening the bonds of faith in your Family.

The faith comes from enduring trials of many kinds produces perseverance. Perseverance through trials develops strength and wisdom which increases faith and commitment to personal and Family values.

Yes, deployment is a trial and comes with its own set of burdens, but maintaining your faith beyond yourself to endure well will directly impact the positive bonds in your Family.

Maintain your faith, we will see you soon enough!



*A Soldier with 2nd Battalion, 28th Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division waves a flag to indicate successful completion of a mission Jan. 24 during the culminating exercise of his month-long familiarization training course facilitated by Soldiers with 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Al Asad, Iraq.
(Photo by Pfc. Dancille Hendrix)*

Check out the
Vanguard Brigade
on the Web

Log on to
www.stewart.army.mil/4thBrigade
www.facebook.com/4th-Brigade-3rd-Infantry-Division