



# THE DAGGER EDGE



## Building Iraqi Security Capacity

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**DAGGER BRIGADE MAINTAINS FOCUS ON MISSION WITH  
DRAWDOWN AND REDEPLOYMENT ON THE HORIZON**

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*August 2011 Volume 1, Issue 5*

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**On this page:** Soldiers with the 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division navigate over a wall during the litter-carry obstacle course during the brigade's Best Medic Competition June 19, 2011 at Camp Liberty, Iraq. Teams representing battalions from around the brigade participated in the competition, designed to mimic the Army's Expert Field Medical Badge course. (U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. Tameka Hall, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)



**On the cover:** *An Iraqi Soldier with the 11th Iraqi Army Division moves through a "shoot house," or model building with targets within, during urban operations live-fire training July 2, 2011 at Camp Taji, Iraq. Soldiers with Company B, 1st "Vanguard" Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division assisted the training, ensuring safety standards were adhered to. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Daniel Stoutamire, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)*

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

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# COL. PAUL CALVERT "DAGGER 6"



Soldiers, Families and friends of the Dagger Brigade,

Your commitment to excellence is amazing and it truly shines bright when I reflect back over the last nine months of this deployment. The immense strength of our Families and friends stood out as we departed Fort Riley on this mission. Facing uncertainty and separation from loved ones in the months to come, I saw a tremendous group of people that have proven to be the foundation of our success each and every day. Wives, husbands, parents, friends and our communities nurturing and caring for the children we left behind and offering continuous love and support as we serve and protect a land that we love.

As we executed our Relief in Place and Transfer of Authority, your professionalism and willingness to learn from a great formation that had just spent a year in combat was decisive to our gaining the situational awareness/understanding necessary to "move out and draw fire." As we did, your selflessness and humility have proven to be pivotal as we worked by, with and through our Iraqi Security Force partners and the various enablers that we have operated with to accomplish our everyday operations.

You graciously integrated teams through battalions into our task organization and made them feel like they belonged – they improved our effectiveness in the fight and you defined what it means to be



team players. I have been inspired by your sense of duty as you have consistently demonstrated that you recognize the importance of our mission – building enduring capabilities for our ISF partners, contributing to a long term strategic relationship between our nation and the Government of Iraq and bringing honor to all those who have served so valiantly in this campaign before us.

You have shown a unique ability to anticipate and embrace change. It has enabled all of you to be flexible and adaptable in an environment that changes often.

My final reflection has caused me on numerous occasions to be overwhelmed by emotion and I bear witness to the personal courage and tremendous sense of honor displayed by you as individuals and as a formation. You have covered each other's flank, provided a

shoulder to cry on, an ear to listen to a buddy in need and paid dignified tribute in a respectful manner to our fallen heroes.

To say that CSM Lewis and I are proud of you would be an understatement; you have our undying respect and appreciation.

But let's not lose our focus. There is still plenty of work to be done and we have our reputation to protect. The manner in which we finish will define our success and our reputation.

Understand that we are vulnerable at this point in time of the fight and we have to work hard to recognize our vulnerabilities, mitigate them through effective control measures and constantly assess the effectiveness of our control measures. Focusing on the mission at hand is imperative. It enables our own force protection and enhances security for those that are relying on us to secure them. Key to our success is unwavering commitment by every Soldier, leader and formation within the brigade – commitment to do the right thing, take care of one another and accomplish every assigned mission to the best of our ability.

For 94 years – there has been no mission too difficult and no sacrifice too great for our brigade. We will execute our duty first – you are Ready Now to finish strong!

**READY NOW!**

**Dagger 6**



# CSM RODNEY R. LEWIS "DAGGER 7"



Having just completed the Commanders Conference, I want to take a few moments to share with each of you some thoughts on the strength of our force. As one of the talking points, the commander and I discussed where we thought we stood as a brigade and ways we could improve.

It is my opinion that leaders at every level should be focused on building the team. Whether you are a team leader or a first sergeant, your ultimate goal is to have a team trained and ready for the rigors of combat.

Obviously, ready implies being more than physically capable of accomplishing your mission. We have had very few Soldiers return from theater due to physical limitations. We have had, however, numerous Soldiers returned for mental and behavior health issues. Each of you came into this operation with a certain level of strength. Resiliency is simply the ability to dust yourself off after suffering a hardship and continuing the mission.

Unfortunately, resiliency is not something you receive during your Rapid Fielding Initiative or Central Issue Facility issue. It is not purchased online from Amazon or Barnes & Noble. It is, in fact, built over time throughout one's life.

As you move forward in this deployment, I want each of you to identify where you may be out of balance needed in your resiliency, and focus your efforts on strengthening yourself and the force.



When I talk about balance, I am referring to your strength in each of the following areas: Physical, Emotional, Social, Spiritual, and Family. When Soldiers are struggling with issues in any of these areas, their ability to bounce back is significantly reduced.

Often times, it is during a crisis in one of these areas that Soldiers realize they are not prepared to carry on with the mission. This is where all of us, especially the leaders, need to identify and strengthen that Soldier before it becomes a matter of returning him or her from theater for follow-on treatment and care. We are each other's best solution to the problem. No one is better prepared than we are to help each other get through our struggles – we have experienced the same sacrifices daily. Who better than us to understand what

that Soldier is going through than one who is by his or her side day after day.

The  on our division patch represents "One team, One fight." We are a brotherhood that needs to be there for our brothers-in-arms when called.

If you or someone you know is struggling with balance issues, do not wait for them to escalate before reaching out for assistance. There are literally hundreds of people you can turn to – talk with your buddy, your leader, your chaplain, or your unit behavior health provider, and discover ways to build your strength and continue the mission. Remember, for every Soldier taken from the fight, someone else will be required to carry that Soldier's load.

Thank you for what you do every day, and if you have not heard me say it lately – I am proud of you for what you are doing for your country today and will continue to do tomorrow.

***No mission too difficult, No sacrifice too great. Duty first, Daggers...Ready Now!***

**Dagger 7**

**CSM Ray Lewis**

# 2-1 SPECIAL TROOPS BN. "GRIFFINS"



Story by 1st Lt. Crystal Sklodowski, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.

Soldiers with the Local Police Transition Team, attached to "Griffin" Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, coordinated and oversaw a 9-mm pistol range for the Baghdad Provincial Directorate of Police at Joint Security Shield, Iraq.

The Iraqi Police provided the ammunition, the preliminary marks-

advisor with the LPTT, STB and a Hickory, N.C., native. "This was a huge step forward—it being the first time I have seen Iraqi leadership acknowledge their training deficiencies, request training assistance to correct those deficiencies, and then develop the training planning."

Along with identifying the Iraqi Police's need for 9-mm sustainment training, Adel requested assistance in locating a range facility large enough to handle training

was run by Lt. Col. Jasim, an officer with the PDOP. He served as the primary instructor and the range safety officer.

Each Iraqi Police Officer was provided with 15 9-mm rounds to qualify on their weapons. Jasim inspected the targets, provided the firers with some additional instruction and guidance prior to firing, and announced the result of the range to the firers.

"The IP officers who attended the



'Griffin' Battalion: Soldiers oversee pistol range for Baghdad Provincial Directorate of Police

manship instruction and majority of the range detail.

The LPTT recently established an advise and assist partnership with the Provincial Directorate of Police, in which key leadership meetings are held bi-weekly to strengthen the relationships between partners, identify the needs of the IP and establish a training schedule to further the IP's capabilities.

"During one of our recent key leadership meetings, Maj. Gen. Adel, the PDOP commander, identified the need for the IP to receive 9-mm sustainment training," said Maj. Scott Coffey, the logistics

more than 50 IP members daily.

"The PDOP had their own range facility, but due to its small size only one IP officer could fire at a time," Coffey said. "The only real work we did was coordinating with 2nd Iraqi Federal Police Division to use their range facility [which permitted] ten firers to shoot at once and made the training event move a lot more quickly."

The LPTT also provided the weapons, a few expert marksmen to refresh the IP trainers on preliminary marksmanship instruction and a few additional safeties to oversee the training. The rest of the range

training were very grateful for the coordination of the range," Coffey said. "For most of them this was the first time they fired their weapon in [a] training exercise since 2004."

"However, the IPs really did not need us at the range. The instructors, the safeties and the range safety officer were all more than proficient at leading the range." 



## 'DRAGOON' MP COMPANY SOLDIER OVERCOMES INJURIES, RETURNS TO IRAQ

Story by 1st Lt. Crystal Sklodowski, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.

A Purple Heart is a meritorious and honorable award that is respected by many—but desired by few. One Soldier who received that award is back in the country where she earned it, serving her country again.

During Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2006, Sgt. Amanda Baca, a military police noncommissioned officer currently serving with the 212th “Draagoon” Military Police Company, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division



and a Douglas, Wis., native, was severely injured by an explosively formed projectile attack

and awarded a Purple Heart.

On the day of the attack, Baca, a wife and mother of two young boys, was serving as the lead gunner in a convoy.

“We were on our way back from [a] mission and as we drove by a particular site, I remembered some suspicious commotion that occurred ahead of our convoy,” Baca said. “I turned the turret to look in the direction of the earlier commotion and not even two seconds later the turret was hit with an EFP.”

The EFP hit directly in front of Baca and blew debris into her face, damaging her face, sight and hearing.

“Immediately following the attack, I was in shock and did not realize the severity of my injuries,” Baca said. “Our convoy then came in contact with small arms fire. As the gunner, I remember charging my machine gun and aiming at the insurgents in the

alleyway as we waited for the quick reaction force.”

Once the quick reaction force showed up, Baca was examined for injuries. Her injuries included damaged ear drums, mild traumatic brain injury and lacerations to the face. She was evacuated to Camp Echo, Iraq, and received treatment for her injuries.

“My ears were bleeding and I could not hear anything that was going on around me,” Baca said. “It was months before I could hear from my left ear again. My hearing has never fully recovered from the incident.”

Baca was awarded with a Purple Heart for her bravery and personal sacrifice on the battlefield.

Baca is currently on her second deployment to Iraq, working in the law-and-order platoon stationed at Camp Taji. She is responsible for monitoring dispatches, supervising Soldiers and patrolling the road.

“I am involved in steady operations during this deployment monitoring movement and dispatches, but my past experiences remind me every day how precious life is,” Baca said. “Death can visit us any day of the week, so it is important to love life and live every moment like it’s your last.”

## 'GRIFFIN' BATTALION LEADERS, IRAQI POLICE SURVEY IRAQI CJC CANINE TRAINING COURSE



Lt. Col. Shilisa Geter, left, commander of “Griffin” Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division and a McRae, Ga., native, and Maj. Ivy Williams, right, local transition teams planner with STB and a Miami native, conduct a site survey of the canine obstacle course at the Criminal Justice Center and visit with Capt. Abdullah, center, a senior Iraqi police officer, June 12, 2011 at Camp Liberty, Iraq. “The Iraqi Police working dogs have improved leaps and bounds since the opening of the canine course at the CJC—and offers a place for the Iraqi Policemen to expand their knowledge base, initiate sustainment training for officers and ensure unit proficiency,” Geter said. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Crystal Sklodowski, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)



# LTC SHILISA GETER "GRIFFIN 6"



To our Griffin Soldiers, Family and friends:

**W**e want to take the time to thank everyone for keeping us in your thoughts and prayers. In June, we celebrated 236 years of our Army's history as we continue our mission here in Baghdad. You can be very proud of our Soldiers, as they continue to go above and beyond while continuing on with the mission.

We want to send a special thanks to the Family Readiness Group and friends who participated in the town hall video teleconference. It proved to be very informative, as we heard directly from spouses and FRG members alike. Everyone is so patient and understanding, and our hats go off to Griffin Battalion Families. We will have another one prior to our redeployment to ensure the Families are informed with the best, most correct, and latest information possible.

Our Soldiers are doing phenomenal work as we partner with the Baghdad Iraqi Police. The Battalion is now located at Victory Base Complex, Joint Security Station Justice, JSS Old MoD, JSS Muthana, Contingency Operating Station Shield, JSS Loyalty, Camp Taji and COS Hammer. The Police Transition Teams, along with military police, are advising and assisting our Iraqi partners with their working dogs, providing security to the local populace, operations tracking and information gathering. I am sure what we are doing will have a lasting impact for years to come, and the Baghdad Iraqi Police will be able to provide better law and order to the people in Baghdad Province.



Sometimes we don't thank them enough—the supporting cast of maintenance, food service, medics, security, chemical reconnaissance, human resources, and logistics Soldiers—but they make everything we do possible.

As we draw down at the various locations, our communications and intelligence Soldiers with Company A "Titan" and Company B "Phoenix" are providing more tactical use to our area of operations. We are extremely proud of them as they continue to exceed every standard in every way. These are the quiet professionals of the battalion. If we cannot effectively communicate across our area of operations or provide intelligence information to protect our Soldiers, we simply cannot accomplish our mission.

We would like to welcome three new company commanders to the Griffin Nation. CPT Chad Forsythe took the helm of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, and he has hit the ground running. CPT Michael Nau has given us great leadership and we wish him well in his future endeav-

ors as he attends George Washington University in pursuit of his masters degree.

Our military police company, the 212th MP Co., has received a new company commander as well. CPT Stephen Reeves arrived from Fort Bliss, Texas, and has brought a wealth of the knowledge and experience to the company. CPT Vanessa Diez, the outgoing commadner, was invaluable in preparing, training, and deploying the company in preparation for its advise and assist mission.

Soon, CPT Ryan Hester will hand over command of the brigade HHC to CPT Phillip Denker. CPT Denker and 1SG Lower will take the company to the next level and we appreciate them tremendously. CPT Ryan Hester has commanded one of the largest companies in the brigade over the past year and will remain within the Dagger Brigade.

We are almost home and cannot wait to see your smiling faces. We truly appreciate all of your prayers and support so keep them coming. Thanks for all you do.

**GRIFFINS! POINT OF THE DAGGER!**

**DAGGERS! READY NOW!**

LTC GETER

CSM WASHINGTON

**Griffin 6 & Griffin 7**

# CSM MICHAEL EVANS

## “VANGUARD 7”



Greetings fellow Vanguards!

As I write this, the battalion is approaching the ten-month mark for the current deployment. The Vanguard Nation is doing great and upholding every standard and task given.

Since the last update, a few significant events have taken place. On May 3, we celebrated our regimental birthday. It was a pleasure to be part of the festivities in displaying our unit's colors and most importantly, its history, as we marked 150 years of service as a Regiment. All Vanguard Soldiers present had a great time. We started with a battalion run down the main roads on Camp Taji. With police escorts, a tank and a Bradley at the start/finish point, and bucket truck with our public affairs representative positioned 40-plus feet up to capture the moment, LTC Cross gave the command “double time.” After a day filled with events, the celebration culminated with Headquarters and Headquarters Company as the champions of the best squad competition and Company B winning the overall best company participation award. After the passing of our Last Rounds to new officer and enlisted Soldiers and a traditional cake cutting ceremony, the festivities were over.

All Soldiers who have served with this fine organization and stood in our formations would be nothing short of humbled as to where the Vanguard Nation is today. The future of this team is solely based off of their efforts so long ago.



I would be remiss if I did not mention our brothers-in-arms from 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment who are currently serving in harm's way in Afghanistan. Thanks to all the fine Soldiers of our sister battalion.

Our time here within the Baghdad province has been a demanding one. The enemy has been busy, but we remain even more vigilant. To date, we have presented the following decorations: 33 Combat Infantryman Badges, 60 Combat Action Badges, and 6 Combat Medical Badges. Luckily, we've not had to present any Purple Hearts. I pray that day will never day will come upon us.

As far as career progression, the Vanguards have been busy as well. We recently conducted our NCO and Soldier of the Quarter Boards. I'm proud to announce that SPC Elizabeth Grace, F Co., and SGT Jon Beauchamp, D Co., were our two selected winners to compete at the brigade level. On

the 24th of May, we conducted our Sergeant Audie Murphy Club selection board. After a grueling day of physical training, hands-on events, an 8-mile ruck march to the range to qualify with assigned weapon, and finally, the board, SSG Wells with Company D was unanimously selected to attend the United States Division – Center board. Finally, on May 26 and 27, we conducted our Ranger School selection process. We started with 22 motivated candidates, and concluded with ten deserving Soldiers earning slots to attend the school. Special recognition goes to SPC Steven Womack, with Company C, Special Troops Battalion, for obtaining the best overall scores and earning the number one seat. We wish them all the very best of luck in their endeavors.

We continue to receive new Soldiers to the formation here, and all are making a contributing contribution to their respective teams. Each of our companies has shifted a bit within its task organization and daily duties as we maneuver within the deployment schedule and taskings from higher.

Finally, as we continue on with the deployment, let's not forget all the tireless efforts of the rear detachment and all Family and friends back home. Their efforts daily allow us to focus on the mission at hand.

In Omnia Paratus!

**Vanguard 7**

CSM Michael F. Evans

# 1-18 INFANTRY REGIMENT "VANGUARDS"



*Iraqi Soldiers with the 11th Iraqi Army Division perform practice runs in a model structure with targets within, known as a "shoot house," to hone their urban operations skills. Soldiers with 1st "Vanguard" Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment observed the training July 2 at Camp Taji, Iraq.*



## VANGUARDS ASSIST 11TH IA DIVISION ON URBAN OPERATIONS

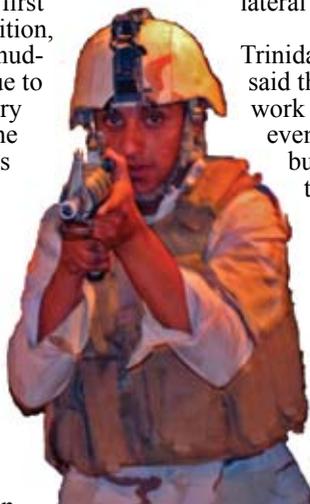
Story and photos by Sgt. Daniel Stoutamire,  
2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.

A swift kick busts open the door, and several Soldiers quickly pour into the room, scanning for enemies and eliminating opposition with quick, accurate bursts of fire. When the first room is empty of opposition, or "clear," the Soldiers huddle together and continue to systematically clear every room in the building. The process is over almost as soon as it begins.

Soldiers with Company B, 1st "Vanguard" Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division assisted with the live-fire urban operations training conducted by their partners with the 11th Iraqi Army Division July 2 at Camp Taji, Iraq, as the IA Soldiers honed their skills on entering and clearing rooms and buildings.

Learning these skills can be vital in a place like Baghdad, with its many narrow streets and densely-populated neighborhoods, said one of the Company B trainers.

"To fight in urban terrain, you've got to go through houses, going through the streets of Baghdad," said 2nd Lt. Jose Trinidad, a platoon leader with Company B. "So it's really important for them to understand concepts like how to go through and assault an objective clearing a house, and taking out whatever enemy



is in there."

The training was based off Battle Drill 6, which prescribes the methods by which a small squad or platoon-sized element can maneuver through rooms and buildings, taking out the enemy and avoiding collateral damage.

Trinidad and other Company B Soldiers said the Iraqi Soldiers had to gradually work their way up to the final training event of actually entering the model building and using live ammunition to engage simulated targets. First, they worked in a "glass house," a two-dimensional, wall-less representation of the building, accurate down to the configuration of the rooms.

"The glass house is a mirror image of what they are going to expect in the actual live-fire shoot house," said Sgt. Sean Campbell, a squad leader with Company B and a Tampa, Fla., native. "It's good familiarization, and helps to develop muscle memory."

Helping the Company B Soldiers was an Iraqi trainer, who acted in a capacity similar to drill sergeants in the U.S. Army—showing the Iraqi Soldiers the proper way to do things, whether through a demonstration or verbal coaching. The trainer has been working with the American Soldiers for some time now, and has developed a good understanding of what the Americans wish to convey to the Iraqi Soldiers, said Trinidad.

Though doing any kind of live-fire training in confined spaces is an inherently risky exercise, the training went off without any problems, said Campbell.

"The Iraqis have been very good at muzzle awareness and safety," he said. "That's our biggest thing we actually look out for."

While there were several positives to take out of the event, more work is needed before the Iraqis can consider themselves a truly professional outfit, Trinidad and Campbell said.

"I think we just need to spend, in general, more time going through everything—



*Sgt. Sean Campbell, right, a squad leader with Company B, 1st "Vanguard" Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division and a Tampa, Fla., native, watches 11th IA Div. Soldiers practice urban operations skills July 2 at Camp Taji, Iraq.*

doing the entering and clearing rooms, Battle Drill 6," Campbell said. "Definitely [they need more] range time, in general, just trigger time."

Trinidad said working with Iraqi intermediaries, such as the trainers, will be crucial.

"They've gone a long way, but it will take time," he said. "The trainers understand that if the Soldiers are given the chance, the training, the time and the leadership they can be a better, more professional army." 🇺🇸



## LONGEST-SERVING VANGUARD BATTALION SOLDIER CONTINUES SERVICE TO HIS UNIT

Story by Spc. William A. Joeckel, *2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.*

The 1st “Vanguard” Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division is a family away from home for many Soldiers within the unit, some of whom have dedicated many years of their life in its service.

One such Soldier is Sgt. Brian McCown, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt. and a Eureka, Mo., native, an M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank crewman who also serves as the battalion ammunition noncommissioned officer, electronic warfare noncommissioned officer, and air movement coordinator.

McCown has been with the unit during multiple deployments, in various job positions. As the longest-serving Vanguard Soldier, he hopes to always be in a position that supports the battalion.

“It’s not only an honor and a privilege to be a part of this organization,” McCown said. “It is also an important part of my life.”

From deployments as a tank crewman patrolling the streets of Iraq, a section leader in the battalion personal security detachment, to multi-tasking three demanding jobs, McCown has proved to be a reliable Soldier that the unit has consistently been able to count on.

“I never left the unit because the leadership has always been great,” said McCown.

McCown’s first deployment was in 2004 with 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. As an Abrams tank crewman, he patrolled the streets of Sadr City, in his tank, for the majority of the tour.



In March 2008 that unit was re-designated as 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt. and McCown has served two deployments with the unit since then. The first deployment was in 2008, as a section leader in the battalion personal security detachment in the lead truck of the battalion commander’s escort team.

McCown is now serving in his third deployment, performing multiple daily task such as scheduling helicopter flights, performing ammunition inventories, and the supervision and upkeep of electronic warfare equipment on the vehicles. His performance in his jobs helps to keep the

Vanguards operating.

Though McCown’s schedule is demanding, he also takes time to mentor the Soldiers in his section.

“He has shown me discipline and what to do in an assortment of situations,” said Pfc. Frankie Busby, a M1 Abrams crewman with HHC, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt. and a Linton, Ind., native. “He takes time out of his already busy day to show me how to do a task instead of just telling me.”

Helping his fellow American citizens back home is also a quality that McCown exhibits. During his rest and relaxation leave to Missouri in late May and early June of this year, he assisted in the relief efforts for the people who lost almost everything in the Joplin tornado disaster. A friend of McCown’s, who owns a camping supply store, donated air conditioning-adaptable tents. McCown helped deliver the tents to the residents of the area.

“He is probably one of the most selfless NCOs I have ever met,” said Staff Sgt.

Sean Rodda, an operations sergeant with 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt. and a Tampa, Fla., native. “No matter how many additional duties are piled on him, he makes that duty his own, and follows it to the absolute completion.”

McCown aspires to be a warrant officer; however, he hopes that whatever work is ahead of him, in some way, supports the Vanguard Battalion.

“Regardless of my future endeavors, I will always be a Vanguard,” McCown said.

# 1-63 ARMOR REGIMENT “DRAGONS”



The thunder of gunfire fills the air as Soldiers with Company C, 1st “Dragon” Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division take their shots on a hard dirt range. The prone Soldiers systematically engage the bullet-ridden silhouettes, preparing themselves to effectively engage the enemy as part of a grueling four-day training range, which included firing in low light conditions and using Avtomat Kalashnikova, also

firing line, wafting over the barriers that comprise the range’s walls, obscuring a burning red sun as it sets.

The waning daylight succumbs to night, but the gunfire does not stop. Soldiers pull vehicles forward and headlights flood the range with beams of light.

The company’s top priority, and first day of firing, consisted of zeroing and confirming zero with personal weapons. Between iterations, groups of five bullet

After fulfilling their curiosity and acquainting themselves with the subtle nuances of the enemy’s firearm of choice, Company C Soldiers returned to their personal weapons and began training short-range marksmanship.

They engaged in static and dynamic ready-up drills, shell casings raining to the ground. On command, the Soldiers identified their targets, pivoted, and stitched the corresponding circle, diamond, square, or triangle with rounds

## ‘DRAGON’ BATTALION SOLDIERS CONDUCT CHALLENGING FOUR-DAY RANGE



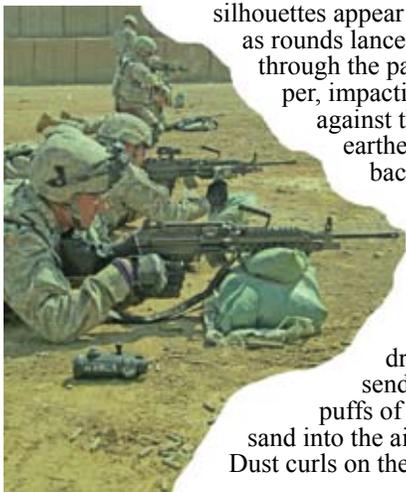
*Soldiers with Company C, 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division zero and qualify in low light conditions during a four-day range June 26, 2011 at Joint Security Station Muthana, Iraq. On the fourth and final evening of the range, Soldiers engaged point targets at 100 meters with no ambient lighting. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Daniel Schilling, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)*

BY 1ST LT. DOUGLAS BENGAL, 2ND AAB, 1ST INF. DIV.

known as AK-47 assault rifles.

“Shooting in imperfect, adverse conditions—where we have limited visibility—is good training,” says Sgt. Daniel Schilling, a squad leader with Company C, 1st Bn., 63rd Armor Regt. and a Burnet, Texas, native.

Darker holes on the black silhouettes appear as rounds lance through the paper, impacting against the earthen back-



drop, sending puffs of sand into the air. Dust curls on the

holes were penned together on the 300-meter sized silhouette targets, denoting a group and their progress towards a convergence on the target’s center of mass.

“It’s hard work zeroing an open-bolt weapon, but worth the time,” said Pfc. Anthony Morin, a mortarman with Company C, 1st Bn., 63rd Armor Regt. and a Costa Mesa, Calif., native, as he inserted a magazine into his M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon.

In the next iteration, Company C Soldiers received familiarization training with AK-47 assault rifles. After a class of primary marksmanship instruction that covered operation, safety, and a discussion of tolerances, Soldiers finally put their hands upon the internationally-ubiquitous weapon system.

“It’s definitely not something we get to do regularly,” said Spc. Shannon McEntyre, a mortarman with Company C, and an Omega, Ga., native. He added that some of the finer points of the AK-47 took time to become accustomed to.

with increasing confidence and fluidity. The crack of rounds, crunching of boots, hollow clinking of empty magazines falling to the ground and snap of bolts slamming home all rang out in a crescendo of competing sounds.

On the final evening, the Soldiers moved out to engagements at greater distance.

Backed off 100 meters, a water bottle is not so difficult a target for a shooter to hit. However, hitting that same water bottle at night, shrouded in dust, with only a thin beam of light betraying its location creates a more difficult scenario.

After a moment of firing, the distant colorful glows were knocked from view before dust from the range’s backstop fully concealed them from the shooters. When the ceasefire was called and dust settled, the range was littered with leaking water bottles resulting in a series of successful shots. 🐉



*Command Sgt. Maj. Toney Smith, left, senior enlisted advisor of 1st "Dragon" Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment and a Louisiana, Mo., native, and 1st Sgt. Alexander Aguilastratt, senior enlisted advisor of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn., 63rd Armor Regt. and a Miami native, unveil a sign dedicating a classroom in honor of Sgt. 1st Class Clifford Beattie June 25, 2011 at Camp Liberty, Iraq. Beattie was known to dedicate much of his own time to training and instructing his Soldiers, making the classroom a fitting memorial.*

## 'DRAGON' BATTALION DEDICATES GYM AND CLASSROOM IN MEMORY OF TWO FALLEN HEROES

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Justin Phemister, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.

While conducting counter indirect-fire operations in Baghdad, Iraq, two Soldiers with the 1st "Dragon" Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their fellow Soldiers and their country May 22.

In their honor, the Dragon Battalion chose to dedicate buildings that best epitomized the spirit of each Soldier in recognition of their service, and to pass on their dedication to duty—a gym and a classroom, where their fellow Soldiers will be able to better themselves mentally and physically for the duration of their deployment.

One of the fallen was Sgt. 1st Class Clifford Beattie, the platoon sergeant of the personal security detachment for the Dragon Battalion's senior enlisted advisor and a Tempe, Ariz., native. Beattie was a leader, mentor, and father figure to his Soldiers.

"When I first met Sgt. 1st Class Beattie, I thought, 'this is what [a noncommissioned officer] looks like,'" said Lt. Col. Michael Henderson, the commander of 1st Bn., 63rd Armor Regt. and an Emmett, Idaho, native. "This is what a leader should be."

To Beattie, the Dragons dedicated a classroom to memorialize his dedication to training and the welfare of his Soldiers.

"May his spirit lend itself to motivate and inspire to functions held within," said Capt. Dave Mooneyham, the chaplain of 1st Bn., 63rd Armor Regt. and a Columbia, S.C., native.

Also recognized was Pfc. Ramon Mora, a rifleman with the personal security detachment for the Dragon Battalion's senior enlisted advisor and a Covina, Calif., native. Mora was a young Soldier who was committed to keeping in peak physical condition.

For his service, the Dragons dedicated their gym in hopes that he will endure in the hearts of those who come there to better themselves through hard work and sweat, like Mora was known to do.

"Pfc. Mora was a gym rat, and I hope his example motivates those who make use of this gym from now on to push themselves just that much harder in his memory," said Command Sgt. Maj. Toney Smith, senior enlisted advisor of 1st Bn., 63rd Armor Regt. and a Louisiana, Mo., native.

Both the gym and classroom received renovations celebrat-

ing their reopening as functional memorials. They were cleaned and repainted, given extra amenities, and christened with resplendent new signs that bore the name and image of the Soldier they now commemorate.

Largely responsible for making the dedications to the two fallen and accompanying renovations to their buildings possible was 1st Sgt. Alexander Aguilastratt, the senior enlisted advisor with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn., 63rd Armor Regt. and a Miami native. He spoke with emotion after the ceremony and implored his Soldiers to remember their brothers and take pride in their own service and the unit.

"See the difference their sacrifices have made, strive to be as strong as they were, and honor their memory by the wearing of this [Big Red One] patch," Aguilastratt said.





# LTC MICHAEL HENDERSON "DRAGON 6"



Dear Soldiers, Families, and friends of the Dragon battalion,

As the battalion enters the final quarter of our historic tour in support of Operation New Dawn, I think back on all we've accomplished and am continually humbled by the tenacity and dedication demonstrated by the Soldiers of this organization.

We have worked tirelessly to both improve the capabilities of, and strengthen ties with, our Iraqi counterparts. Our Soldiers have done so in the face of adversity, often reacting to unforeseen circumstances. The efforts of Dragon Soldiers are all the more commendable for professionally executing under the most challenging environmental and geopolitical conditions. We have made great headway in taking the fight to the enemy by, with, and through our partners in the 6th and 17th Iraqi Army Divisions. The violent extremist networks are feeling constant pressure from the daily operations conducted by the Dragons.

Company A "Ace" continues to provide quick reaction force support for all of western Baghdad, as well as force protection for Victory Base



Complex. Company B "Bounty Hunters" are doing a superb job supporting the efforts of the 6th Iraqi Army stability transition team, conducting force protection operations, and partnering closely with Iraqi battalions to secure Baghdad. Company C "Cobra" is setting the standard while supporting the Karkh Area Command transition team, conducting force protection for the Green Zone, as well

as Joint Security Station Muthana. Company D "Death Dealers" are doing an outstanding job supporting the 17th IA STT and partnering with the 17th IA Div. commando battalion. Company E "Eagle" continues to support three outlying joint security stations and maintain our equipment to standard. Headquarters and Headquarters Company's scout platoon and staff sections support numerous missions in the area of operations and provide command and control for an area once controlled by three brigades. The 511th Engineer Co. "Reaper" continues to excel by the enhancing mobility on main supply routes throughout the AO for every unit that travels through western Baghdad. I am proud of all the tasks our Soldiers accomplish on a daily basis!

I would like to thank our Families for their support. We miss and love you and look forward to our return this fall!

Seek, Strike, Destroy, DRAGONS!

Dragon 6

Soldiers, Families, and Friends of the Dragon battalion,

For the past three months, the Soldiers of the Dragon battalion have been repeatedly tested by the myriad challenges of Operation New Dawn—confronting a shifty enemy, training and assisting the Iraqi Army, preparing our equipment not only for missions, but also for turn in before our redeployment from theater. Each of the challenges can be formidable in their own respect, the Dragon Soldiers, like the Dagger Brigade, have taken on these missions simultaneously and done so with the utmost efficiency and professionalism.

I am particularly proud of the young leaders I see during battlefield circulation and any other chance I get to put my boots on the ground. A smoothly operating squad of dismounted Soldiers is a fine sight. I see the drive and motivation displayed in them also reflected in the support, maintenance, staff, and even civilian assets within the battalion.

That said, it is important not to become too com-

fortable. Those spending large parts of their day in blistering heat of the day may scoff at the notion, but it is routine and overconfidence that make the ends of this deployment more dangerous than the beginning of it. Fatigue from the heat, and a shift in focus to the return home are equally dangerous. Leaders and



Soldiers alike need to remind themselves and each other that the proper execution of the mission is more important now, than ever. Take a moment out of your day to remember that nearly a decade's worth of our country's efforts will hinge upon the results of Operation New Dawn.

To the Families back home I can only say thank you. I understand the hardships that you've endured without your loved ones presence. For some, it may be their second, third, even forth year away, but knowing at the end of the deployment there is a home to come back to keeps things in perspective and makes it all worthwhile.

Soldiers, beware the heat. Keep yourselves hydrated, fit, and ready. Keep fighting the good fight, and be proud to serve in a great organization.

Seek, Strike, Destroy, DRAGONS

Dragon 7



# CSM TONEY SMITH "DRAGON 7"





# LTC ANDREW GAINEY "LIGHTNING 6"



Family, friends and fellow Dagger Brigade Soldiers: we hope that everyone is looking forward to the fall season as summer begins to end.

I wish I could tell you that everything is well and that all of the Soldiers are doing fine, but as you are well aware, the First Lightning battalion is not immune from the dangers that persist in Iraq. On June 6, 2011, many of the Soldiers of this battalion's lives changed forever. Some of us were heading to the gym for morning physical training, some of us were getting off or beginning to move to our respective duty position, and many of us were asleep dreaming of the day we would be reunited with our loved ones back home.

Around 5:30 a.m., we were awakened by earth-shattering sounds as we were attacked with indirect fire. What transpired after the attack would make me and CSM Bauer both sad and proud.

The Soldiers and leaders of the First Lightning battalion reacted quickly and diligently. Every Soldier did their best to ensure that their brothers and sisters-in-arms who were harmed by the attack received the medical attention they needed.

Not one Soldier stood and watched—everyone worked as a cohesive unit. For this, I am exceedingly proud. Proud to clearly witness how hard work, productive training and concise leadership can produce such a unified unit who cared not about themselves, but only about their fellow Soldiers well-being.

Unfortunately, it saddens me to report that we lost five members of our battalion during this attack.



SPC Michael Benjamin Cook Jr. of Bravo Battery and a Middletown, Ohio, native; SPC Robert Preston Hartwick of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery and a Rockbridge, Ohio, native; SPC Christopher Brook Fishbeck of HHB and a Victorville, Calif., native; SPC Emilio Jamie Campo Jr., of HHB and a Madelia, Minn., native; PFC Michael Curtis Olivieri of HHB and a Chicago native. Moreover, we lost a Soldier who was medically evacuated back to the United States for further treatment: SPC Marcos Armando Cintron of Bravo Battery and a native of Orlando, Fla.

This tragic loss has been felt by everyone in the battalion and it has galvanized us a unit, determined not to let their sacrifice be in vain.



I want to encourage you to keep these fallen heroes and their Families in your hearts and prayers, now and always.

Our Battalion has also suffered many wounded who had to be medically evacuated to various destinations. I am happy to say that all are doing well, and we wish them a quick recovery. Please keep these individuals in your heart and prayers also.

I want to tell you that we are not alone in this. Leaders from across the Army hurried to mobilize to ensure that we got what we need to become 100 percent combat effective. They also brought in specialist to assist us in building a better Joint Security Station Loyalty. I would like to give a special thanks to the great Soldiers of the 'Dagger' Brigade, United States Division – Center, 20th Engineering Brigade, the men and women of Kellogg, Brown and Root, and the many other units who have been nothing but helpful in assisting the First Lightning battalion continue to stay focused on our mission.

In conclusion, the continued support you have provided for the 'First Lightning' Soldiers has not been unnoticed. We will continue to make you proud of all that we do, and we look forward to completing the mission and returning back home with our Families and friends. More than ever before, we will continue to live up to our motto: "Never broken by Hardship or Battle!"

FIRST LIGHTNING!

**Lightning 6**  
LTC Andrew C. Gainey

**Lightning 7**  
CSM William F. Bauer



# CSM WILLIAM BAUER "LIGHTNING 7"



# 1-7 FIELD ARTILLERY REGIMENT “LIGHTNING”



## REMEMBERING FALLEN HEROES

*Soldiers with First Lightning Battalion, Dagger Brigade, and leaders from around United States Forces - Iraq pay respects to six Soldiers who died as a result of a June 6 indirect fire attack at Joint Security Station Loyalty*

Story and photos by Sgt. Daniel Stoutamire,  
2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.

Soldiers and leaders from around the 2nd “Dagger” Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center and United States Forces – Iraq, along with representatives from the U.S. Department of State, attended memorial services June 9 and June 20 at Joint Security Station Loyalty, Iraq, to celebrate the lives and mourn the passing of six fallen Dagger Brigade Soldiers.

Specs. Emilio J. Campo Jr., 20, Robert P. Hartwick, 20, Michael B. Cook Jr., 27, Christopher B. Fishbeck, 24, and Pfc. Michael C. Olivieri, 26, died June 6 of wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked their unit with indirect fire.

Spec. Marcos A. Cintron, 32, died June 16 at a medical facility in Boston of wounds suffered in those attacks. His memorial was held June 20.

All six Soldiers were assigned to the 1st “First Lightning” Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.

“As for most of you here, the thought of each of our heroes departing our formation has been both extremely difficult and challenging,” said Lt. Col. Andrew Gainey, commander of 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt. “Challenging and difficult because these were exceptional American Soldiers who represented the Army values that make this the most respected organization in America. They were husbands,

“These were exceptional American Soldiers who represented the Army values that make this the most respected organization in America. They were husbands, they were fathers, brothers, sons, and friends, but most of all, our Soldiers and our heroes,” Gainey said

they were fathers, brothers, sons, and friends, but most of all, our Soldiers and our heroes.”

Though Campo, a Madelia, Minn., native, and Hartwick, a Rockbridge, Ohio, native, served together as medics in Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt., their personalities were quite different.

“Spec. Hartwick was bold and outspoken and would never back down from a challenge; he was very outgoing, adventurous and made friends easily,” said Spec. Derek Wolske, a medic with 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt. and a Waukesha, Wis., native. “Campo, on the other hand, was soft-spoken, organized, athletic and very confident

in his approach to life.”

Wolske said Hartwick and Campo, who were roommates, did have something in

common, however.

“They were both great friends with each other and all of us,” he said.

**(Right)** Col. Paul Calvert, commander of 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., grasps the identification tags of Spc. Marcos A. Cintron, who died June 16 from wounds sustained in a June 6 indirect fire attack on Joint Security Station Loyalty, Iraq, during Cintron's memorial ceremony June 20 at JSS Loyalty. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy, 29th MPAD)

**(Below left)** Members of the honor detail with Battery B, 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt., 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div. prepare to fire a volley during a memorial service held June 9, 2011 at JSS Loyalty for five fallen Soldiers from the unit. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Daniel Stoutamire, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)

“They were honored to serve as medics and care for all of you... Spc. Hartwick and Spc. Campo, it was our honor to serve with both of you.”

Cook, a Middletown, Ohio, native, served as an automated field artillery tactical data system specialist with Battery B, 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt. As one of the older Soldiers in his unit, he served as a kind of mentor to the younger Soldiers.

“Spc. Cook was an excellent battle buddy,” said Pfc. Marquis Davis, also with Battery B and an Enterprise, Ala., native. “His ability to teach, listen and work with other Soldiers was outstanding and I was impressed and inspired to become a better Soldier every day.”

Cook had the tools of his trade down pat, Davis said.

“Cook was a genius and he knew the system like clockwork, and whatever he could do to become better he would do it.”

Fishbeck, a Victorville, Calif., native, served in HHB, 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt., in the same Military Occupational Specialty as Cook. Full of enthusiasm and determination, Fishbeck was remembered for his unique drive.

“Fishbeck wasn’t the tallest guy, and we have air ducts that are ten-and-a-half feet high,” said Spc. Shadrach Brock, also of HHB and a Fort Payne, Ala., native. “We all managed to get a finger on it except Fishbeck. Well, he wasn’t having any of it, so even though the rest of us were howling and laughing, Fishbeck jumped for at least an hour—bound and determined to touch that air duct until finally we told him that he touched it just so he would stop.”

Fishbeck was recently married to his high school sweetheart, Stephanie Kidder. The couple wed while Fishbeck was on leave.

“The entire time I worked with him out here, he talked about her,” Brock said. “Every day he had to tell me something about the conversation they had the night before, and how much he loved her.”

Olivieri, a Chicago native, was, like Cook and Fishbeck, an automated field artillery tactical data system specialist, though he served as an intelligence analyst during this deployment. He was well-suited for the job.

“He made certain that I was kept informed of every matter and the care and thoroughness with which he mastered the immense daily flow of information made a profound mark,” said Capt. Joshua Krause, intelligence officer with HHB, 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt. and a South Dakota native. “Of all the intel-

ligence sections that I have been a part of, he is and will remain one of the top performers that I am humbled to have served and served with.”

Cintron, a cannon crew member with Battery



B and an Orlando, Fla., native, left a lucrative career with a major airline to enlist in the Army, even though he had a degree and could have entered the officer corps.

When asked about why he would do such a thing, Cintron would always say, “I’m doing this for my father. He asked me to do this for the honor of our family,” said Spc. Richard Zacarias, also of Battery B and a Las Vegas native.

Cintron was a devoted family man, who was proud of his wife and family, through whom his legacy will endure, Zacarias said.

“In the end, even though our brother-in-arms and one of my best friends is no longer here, his smile, his self-respect, love and commitment to his family and brethren around him will never be lost,” he said. “His legacy continues through his family and the stories and memories we shared with him.”

Gainey urged his battalion to band together in spite of the tragic recent events.

“Though our hearts are heavy, we will not bow to the threats that exist outside this formation. We must gain strength from the sacrifices made by our heroes, and galvanize as a unit and continue to defend the very freedom our brothers died protecting.”



# 5-4 CAVALRY REGIMENT "LONGKNIFE"



Story by 2nd Lt. Jude Cooke, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.

Troopers with Troop C "Comanche," 5th "Longknife" Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division welcomed several members of the Kansas City Chiefs cheerleaders July 7 to Joint Security Station Justice, Iraq.

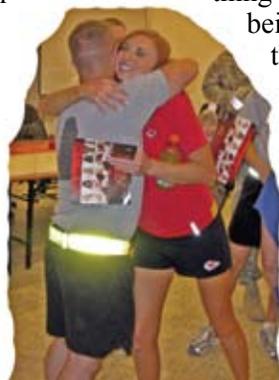
The Longknife Squadron's home base of Fort Riley, Kansas, is only a two-hour drive from Arrowhead Stadium, home of the Kansas City Chiefs, making them something of the hometown team. However, this meeting almost didn't happen.

"We knew that the guys and gals of Comanche Troop needed us, and it was down to the wire," said Julie Sektnan, a Morale, Welfare, and Recreation coordinator with United States Division - Center. "The Soldiers won [the debate of whether it would be possible to come] and always will win, and

that is why we flew here tonight."

The cheerleaders almost didn't stop at JSS Justice because of time delays due to weather. However, Sektnan was able to work with air assets and get a block of 30 minutes where the cheerleaders could meet with Comanche Troop Soldiers.

"When I informed the [Kansas City Chief] cheerleaders that we would have to make one more stop before [Victory Base Complex], they responded with a loud 'Hooah!,' Sektnan said. "I guess it was something they learned from being out here with the Soldiers."



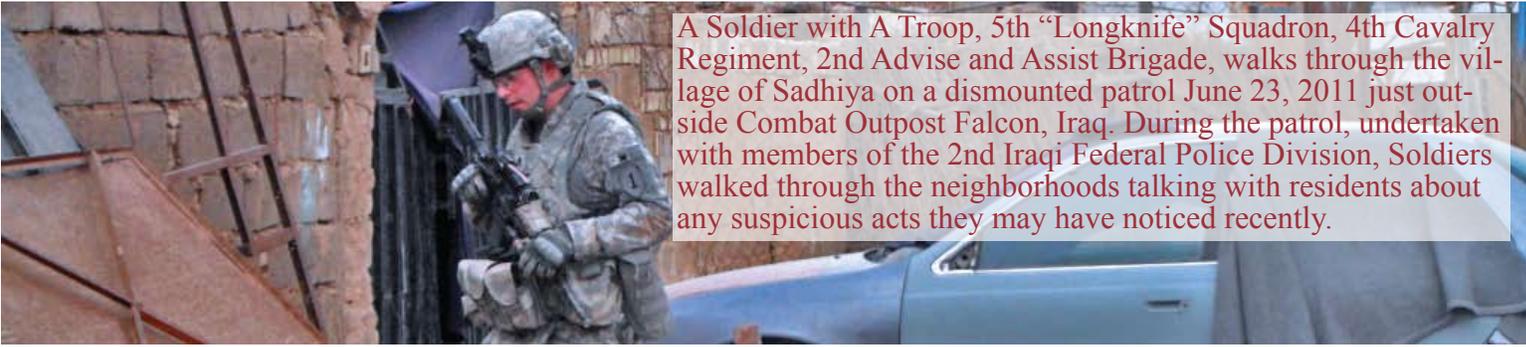
Once at JSS Justice, the cheerleaders took pictures with the Soldiers and signed autographs. They also gave out Kansas City

Chiefs T-shirts. Though the cheerleaders were not able to perform their dance routine due to time restraints, the mere fact that they were able to visit was all that mattered for the Soldiers.

"It was motivational for Soldiers to see that Americans care about their well-being," said Sgt. 1st Class Duncan Knight, a platoon sergeant with C Troop, 5th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt. and a Mobile, Ala., native. "We appreciate them taking their time out of their schedule to come see us over in Iraq."

Cpl. Jose Enriquez, a native of El Paso, Texas, said that he found the cheerleaders to be very down-to-earth and approachable, a sentiment echoed by many other Comanche Troop Soldiers.

"I am definitely considering buying season tickets for when I get back," said Pfc. Kurt Scapardine, a cavalry scout with C Troop, 5th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt. and a Chicago native. 🇺🇸

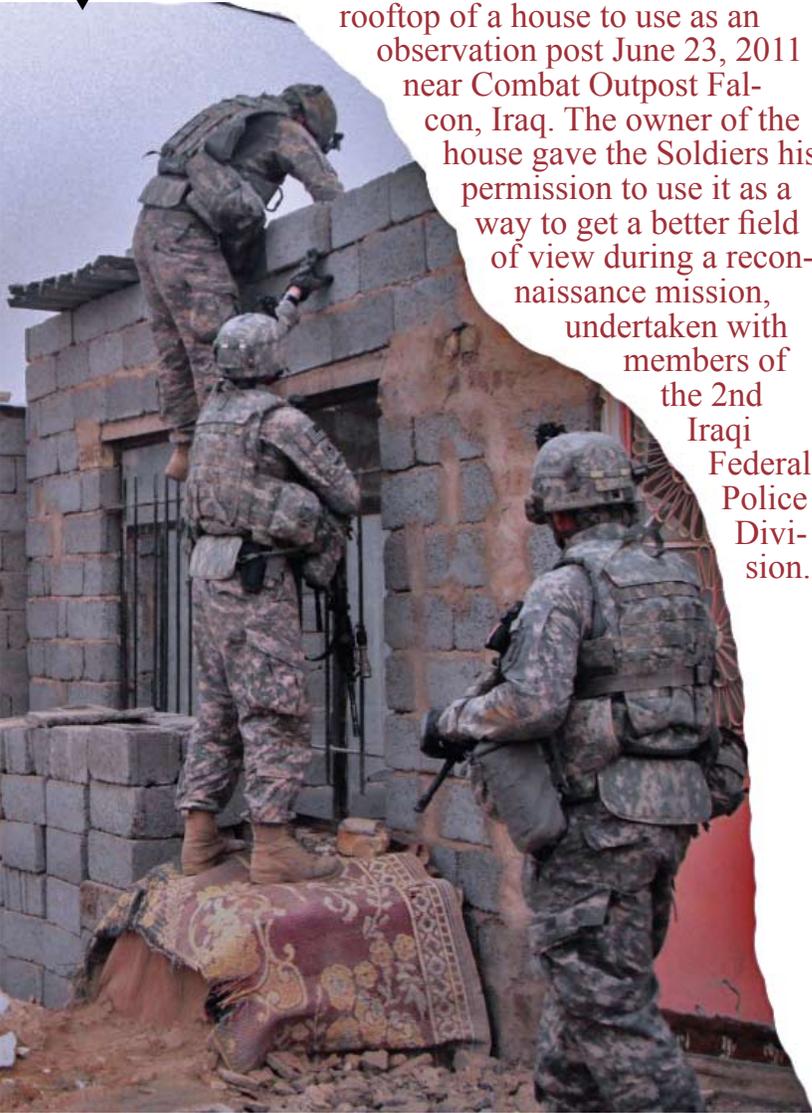


A Soldier with A Troop, 5th “Longknife” Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, walks through the village of Sadhiya on a dismounted patrol June 23, 2011 just outside Combat Outpost Falcon, Iraq. During the patrol, undertaken with members of the 2nd Iraqi Federal Police Division, Soldiers walked through the neighborhoods talking with residents about any suspicious acts they may have noticed recently.

# LONGKNIFE SQUADRON PATROLS WITH IRAQI FEDERAL POLICE IN BAGHDAD

*Photos by 1st Lt. Eric Rekedahl, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.*

Soldiers with A Troop, 5th “Longknife” Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division climb onto the rooftop of a house to use as an observation post June 23, 2011 near Combat Outpost Falcon, Iraq. The owner of the house gave the Soldiers his permission to use it as a way to get a better field of view during a reconnaissance mission, undertaken with members of the 2nd Iraqi Federal Police Division.



Soldiers with A Troop, 5th “Longknife” Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division and 2nd Iraqi Federal Police Division shurta, or policemen, conduct a mounted reconnaissance patrol June 23, 2011 near the local Sadhiya neighborhood just outside Combat Outpost Falcon, Iraq. Reconnaissance patrols are conducted on a regular basis throughout Baghdad to protect the local citizens, as well as American Soldiers and Iraqi Security forces in the area.



# LTC MATTHEW MOORE "LONGKNIFE 6"



Today, I hope this finds you all doing well. We are approaching the final stretch of our tour and with each day we grow more cohesive as a squadron. As of late, the temperature is reaching the triple digits, so we are acclimating to the desert summer. Though the temperature is steadily rising, we continue to drive on with our mission of advising and assisting our Iraqi Federal Police counterparts. Troops continue to train and interact with their respective Federal Police partners, building strong relationships that will continue to grow. The work the Longknife Squadron has done thus far is paying off, as the Iraqi Federal Police are becoming a better trained and further disciplined fighting force.



range to occupy any down time they are granted. As a fun way to encourage the Troopers to improve their physical fitness level, Comanche Troop leadership awards an Army Achievement Medal to each Soldier that puts forth the hard work and dedication to run 100 miles in one month.

To the Troopers with 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry, continue to put forth the great effort you have to this point. The work you are doing does not go unnoticed. In the upcoming months, we must endeavor to uphold the honor and pride we have brought to this squadron.

The Troops have been working hard and staying on task, but they take full advantage of any chance they are given to enjoy themselves. At Combat Outpost Falcon, Longknife Troops celebrated Memorial Day by holding a friendly competition that involved a number of points-based events to include basketball, dodgeball, darts, putt-putt golf, and card games. It was great to see the Troops enjoy themselves on such a special day. On Saturday nights, we enjoy a movie and barbeque,

giving the Troopers a chance to socialize and unwind at the conclusion of each long week.

At Joint Security Station Justice, C Troop "Comanche" has had a few events to help entertain the Soldiers. They've had visits from the Kansas City Chiefs cheerleaders and boxing legend Oscar de la Hoya. The Troopers at JSS Justice have used some imagination to construct an archery range, as well as a driving

In closing, I'd like to address the Families back home. The support from friends and Family helps immensely. Packages and mail put a smile on everyone's face and raises morale. As I mentioned earlier, we are past the halfway point. We look forward to our return home, as you look forward to having us back.

PREPARED AND LOYAL!

LTC Matthew R. Moore

As a senior non-commissioned officer, it brings me great joy to be overseas with my Soldiers. As we continue on in Operation New Dawn, each day we are becoming a closer Family. There comes a time in each deployment when every Soldier thinks he or she cannot take another day. Fighting through those tough times and finding a way to push on is what makes a Soldier so adaptive. Training, mixed with experience is what molds a Soldier into the person he or she comes to be. 'Adapt and overcome' is what they were told, and that is exactly what the Longknife Soldiers have done here in Baghdad.

make their own destiny. The Soldiers have done what has been asked of them and much more. We have conducted numerous operations with our



counterparts that have led to the increased security of our area of operation. During this time, we have also conducted training that has ensured we remain proficient in the skills that are essential to the success of our mission. The hot desert summer has put us to the test, but through teamwork and discipline, we have prevailed.

During our time here, many things have changed for us and our Iraqi counterparts. We have given our time, sweat and blood to insure that the people of Iraq are able to

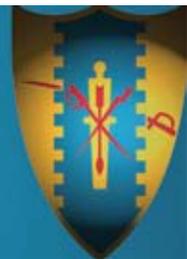
To the Families at home, your much needed support and offerings have helped in more ways than you can imagine. We realize the daily struggles you endure, and we in the Longknife Squadron admire you for your strength and courage.

PREPARED AND LOYAL!

CSM Robert Tompkins



# CSM ROBERT TOMPKINS "LONGKNIFE 7"





# LTC DALE FARRAND “LIFELINE 6”



First, it has been a tough few months for the Dagger Brigade. The thoughts of the Lifeline Battalion are with the Soldiers and Families of the Dragon and First Lightning Battalions who lost loved ones and brothers in arms. I want to personally thank the Lifeline Soldiers for the technical skill they displayed, compassion and generosity in supporting our sister battalions. Although tragic, actions over the last few weeks demonstrated why we use familial terms in describing our formations. As I always say, 99% of our nation cannot fathom what a Soldier goes through on a day to day basis just doing his or her job – it is simply amazing.

We have passed our ninth month in Iraq – nearly all of the battalion has been on R&R, it is not unusual to see the daily high top out at 115 degrees and Soldiers are beginning to think about what unit is going to replace us and what conditions we need to meet so we can depart Iraq. Meanwhile, the battalion continues to support the Dagger Brigade to the tune of 41 million gallons of fuel,



train the 6th Iraqi Army Division at the Supply Support Activity.

While the Lifeline Battalion continues to get after it in Iraq, the rear detachment, Family Readiness Group, and all of the Families continue to keep the fires stoked at Fort Riley. CPT Eldridge and team hosted a virtual town hall meeting that both Lifeline 7 and I addressed. Some great questions were asked and if you have not seen a copy of the transcript, please ask your rear

for granted than we should.

What to do? First, make an assessment of personal goals you had for the year. Have you met them, are you on- or off-track in meeting them prior to redeployment?

Second, take a look at how you and your unit—team, section, platoon, or family conduct business. Is there something you can improve?

Finally, take a brief look at the future. What are your plans upon return? Will you change duty stations, relocate from home back to Fort Riley or just take some well-deserved block leave?

No matter where you hang your hat—Iraq or the United States—you are helping to write history. Not only are you part of a battalion that has proudly served our nation for 45 years, but you are serving in a brigade and division that both recently celebrated their 94-year lineage. The battalion is completing its 4th tour in Iraq and we are making a difference. Every day, we get closer to getting

**No matter where you hang your hat—Iraq or the United States—you are helping to write history...Every day, we get closer to getting all U.S. forces out of Iraq and we are making the Iraqi Security Forces stronger so that future Soldiers will not have to deploy to this country again.**

1.8 million rounds of ammunition, 3,200 work orders, 7,600 patients, and 170 combat logistics patrols.

We also continue our advise, train and assist mission. Company C “Cobras” conducted an intensive on-site training and aid station set up session with the 4th Iraqi Federal Police Division.

Company B “Bandits” conducted the first-ever maintenance training with the 11th Iraqi Army Division, and Company A “Atlas” continues to

detachment NCOIC or FRG leader. In August, the rear detachment and FRG also hosted a ‘Halfway There’ party. If you have not participated in the FRG or rear detachment, it is not too late.

With the deployment three-quarters of the way over, most Soldiers and Families have developed skills to cope with the separation. This is one of the most dangerous times, when accidents can and do occur simply because what was once new is now familiar and we take more actions

all U.S. forces out of Iraq and we are making the Iraqi Security Forces stronger so that future Soldiers will not have to deploy to this country again. We are able to accomplish our missions because we know we have the love and support of our Families at home; we could not do this without you.

**ON CALL TO SERVE!**

**Lifeline 6**

# 299TH BRIGADE SUPPORT BATTALION "LIFELINE"



Sgt. 1st Class Jill A. Serrano, right, a New Martinsville, W. Va., native, and Staff Sgt. Wanda Harvey, center, a King William, Va., native, both with Company C, 299th "Lifeline" Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division discuss the placement of medical supplies during the set up of the Level One medical facility at Joint Security Station Jihad, Iraq, May 31, 2011. Level One medical facilities possess sick call capabilities along with life, limb and eyesight controls. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michelle Mendoza, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)



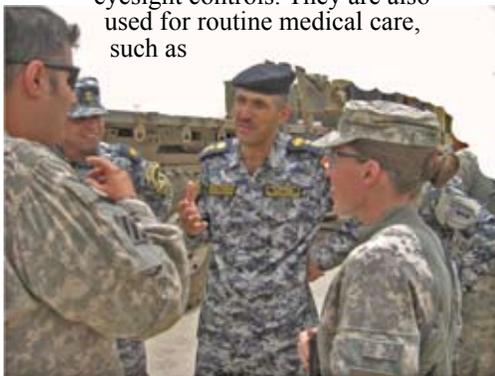
## 'Lifeline' Battalion assists Iraqi Federal Police in establishing medical facility

Story by By Sgt. 1st Class Jill Serrano, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.

On May 31, medical personnel with Company C, 299th "Lifeline" Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division conducted a joint operation with the 4th Iraqi Federal Police Department to establish a Level One medical facility at Joint Security Station Jihad, Iraq.

Medical supplies were gathered by the 299th BSB and delivered to the intended Level One medical facility location, which was accepted with open arms by the members of the 4th IFP Div.

Level One medical facilities possess sick call capabilities along with life, limb and eyesight controls. They are also used for routine medical care, such as



common colds, back pain, headache, sinusitis, sprains and strains.

The Soldiers with Company C took a personal interest in this project after they learned of the Iraqi counterparts' lack of individual medical skills and equipment needed to perform basic care for a range of maladies, from the simplest illness or to the most severe battle wound.

With only four hours available in which to complete the mission, the combat medics from Company C created a foundation for a successful Level One medical facility and established an initial protocol to be used as a baseline for the 4th IFP Div.'s medical care. Working hand in hand with the 4th IFP Div. was invigorating for some of the Soldiers who were experiencing their first partnership mission.

"I had no idea what to expect, but this experience has given me a better understanding of Iraqi culture and the needs of the Iraqi [Security] Forces," said Spc. Billy Mayberry, a patient administration specialist with Company C, 299th BSB and a Ledyard, Conn., native. "I cannot wait to be out here again."

The Soldiers' first task was the set up of the pharmacy department. The 4th IFP Div. policemen were particularly

enthusiastic for this new capability and were ready to advance their knowledge of medication dispensing and dosing. Sgt. Michelle Mendoza, pharmacy technician with Company C, 299th BSB and a Jersey City, N.J., native, provided her expertise in the handling and storage of medications. She instructed the Iraqi policemen on a system of tagging and separating, and explained reasons why certain drugs shouldn't be prescribed to be taken together.

The medics also found time to help local patients amid the tasks associated with the setup of the medical facility.

At the end of the day, the Soldiers noted that their 4th IFP Div. counterparts were enthusiastic with the outcome of patient care, training and formal supervision over the pharmacy department, the Level One medical facility and the coordination for future training engagements.

"Working with the [Iraqi] Federal Police was an invigorating experience," said Pfc. Michael Wehner, a medic with Company C, 299th BSB and a Pittsburgh native. "Their eagerness was projected through their faces and their search for knowledge gave me an overwhelming feeling of accomplishment."



# “NO ONE IS MORE PROFESSIONAL THAN I.”

LIFELINE BATTALION WELCOMES SOLDIERS INTO NCO RANKS

Story and photos by Sgt. Daniel Stoutamire,  
2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.

“No one is more professional than I.” So goes the first line of the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer, which all Soldiers who wish to take on the responsibility of enlisted leadership must know backward and forward. Twenty-one Soldiers with the 299th “Lifeline” Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division made the transition into that leadership June 18 at Camp Liberty, Iraq, during an NCO induction ceremony.

The ceremony was attended by senior enlisted leaders from throughout United States Forces – Iraq and 2nd AAB, including Command Sgt. Maj. Rodney R. Lewis, senior enlisted advisor of 2nd AAB and a Lynchburg, Ohio, native, and Command Sgt. Maj. Franklin Jordan, senior enlisted advisor of 299th BSB, 2nd AAB and an Alapaha, Ga., native.

Lewis encouraged the new NCOs to tailor solutions to problems, rather than confront every setback in the same way.

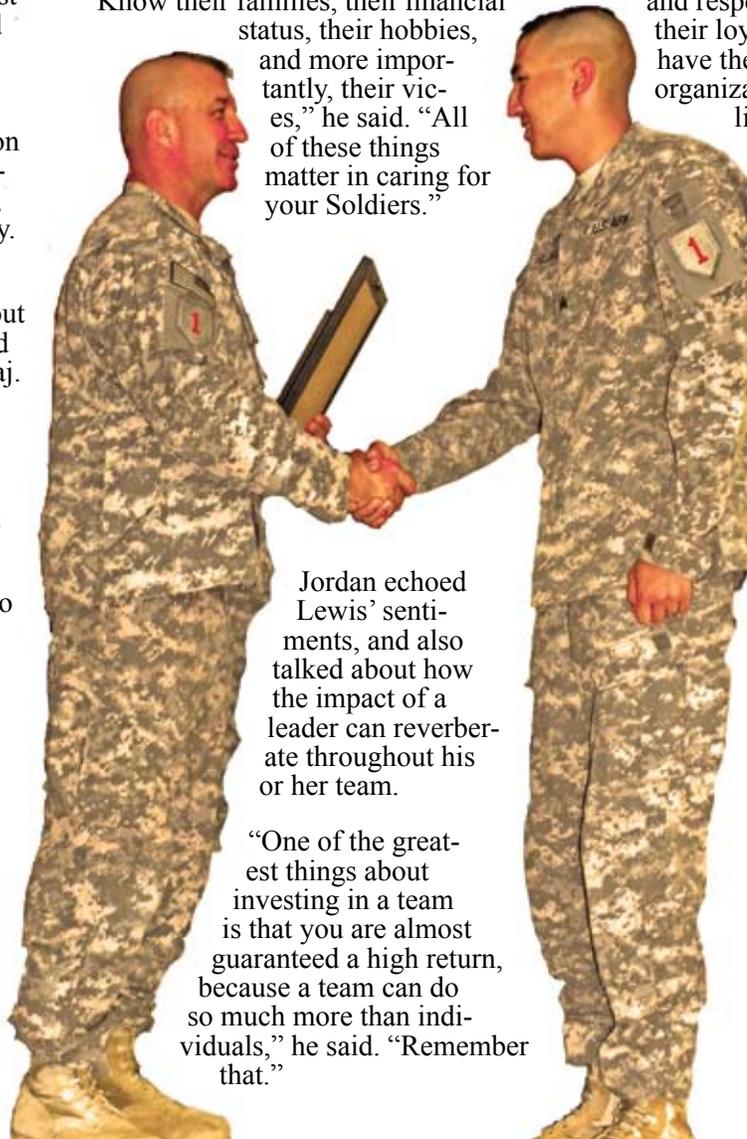
“Some of you have only one item in your toolkit – a hammer,” Lewis said. “All of your problems are therefore seen as a nail, and you start pounding away. Stop, determine what tool is necessary based on the situation and the Soldier, and then proceed. In most cases, you will find that a hand on the shoulder and the words ‘you let me down’ are more effective.”

Knowing one’s Soldiers is also part of being an NCO and is mentioned as well in the NCO Creed—“I know my Soldiers and will always place their needs above my own.” Lewis advised that NCOs knowledge of their Soldiers should be more than skin-deep.

“Know their families, their financial status, their hobbies, and more importantly, their vices,” he said. “All of these things matter in caring for your Soldiers.”

After the new NCOs heard these words of wisdom, they walked onto the podium, through the giant arch emblazoned with the letters “NCO” on it, and were congratulated by Lewis and Jordan on their new status.

“Treat your Soldiers with dignity and respect, and you will earn their loyalty,” Lewis said. “You have the power to build a great organization here in the Lifeline Battalion through your example and your desire to demonstrate excellence every day.”



Jordan echoed Lewis’ sentiments, and also talked about how the impact of a leader can reverberate throughout his or her team.

“One of the greatest things about investing in a team is that you are almost guaranteed a high return, because a team can do so much more than individuals,” he said. “Remember that.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Rodney R. Lewis, left, senior enlisted advisor of 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division and a Lynchburg, Ohio, native, congratulates Sgt. James Hollinger, a motor transport operator with Company A, 299th “Lifeline” Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div. and an Aurora, Colo., native, during a noncommissioned officer induction ceremony June 18, 2011 at Camp Liberty, Iraq. More than 20 Soldiers with the 299th BSB were inducted into the NCO corps, the storied “backbone of the Army,” at the ceremony. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Daniel Stoutamire, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)



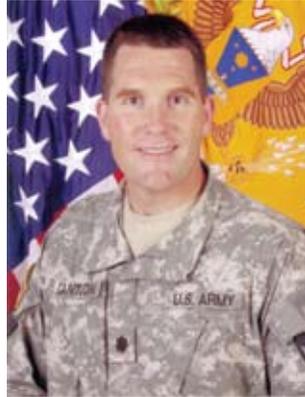
# LTC CAMERON CANTLON "SABER 6"



To the Dagger Brigade,

It has been an honor to work with you these past months. From the time we joined your ranks in February, we have had the privilege to get to know many of you in our combined advise and assist missions throughout Baghdad and Radwaniyah.

We would like to especially thank the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment and 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment for all their hard work in helping us through our integration process when we arrived in February. Your efforts gave us a unique opportunity to partner with the 4th Iraqi Federal Police Division.



Div. without the support and guidance that you, the Dagger Brigade, have

on to our next mission here in Iraq.

Although brief, we are thankful for the opportunity to work with you and assist you in your mission here in Iraq. Your mission is vital to our overall success and our responsible drawdown of troops. But more importantly, your mission and your hard work honors the years of sacrifice that U.S. forces before us have already made here. We hope that you keep this in perspective as you continue to successfully fulfill your mission of working with the Iraqi Security Forces and positively influencing the lives of the Iraqi people.

As we move on to our next mission,

Although brief, we are thankful for the opportunity to work with you and assist you in your mission here in Iraq. Your mission is vital to our overall success and our responsible drawdown of troops. But more importantly, your mission and your hard work honors the years of sacrifice that U.S. forces before us have already made here.

Through this partnership with the 4th IFP Div., we were able to implement several successful training programs, on topics such as traffic control points, combat life saver, basic mechanic skills, and more that we believe have better prepared the shurta of the 4th IFP Div. to conduct their security missions in Baghdad. Additionally, this partnership allowed us to positively influence the lives of Iraqi civilians by providing humanitarian aid in the form of food bags and school kits, helping with a water pump improvement project for local farmers, and repairing two local schools.

However, we could not have had this successful partnership with the 4th IFP

consistently provided to us. Your professionalism and discipline has been an example to us, and it is a standard that we will carry with us as we move



we wish you all the best during the months you have remaining in Iraq and look forward to any future opportunities that we have to work with you once again!

Once again, it has been an honor to serve with you and we are thankful for all that you have done for us in this mission.

**SABERS NEVER QUIT!**

**SABER 6 & SABER 9**



# SGM RICHARD BURNETTE "SABER 9"



# AROUND THE BRIGADE...



## SECDEF VISITS VBC

*Spc. Joseph Fleschner, a combat medic with 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd "Dagger" Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division and a Chuluota, Fla., native, asks a question to Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, foreground, July 11, 2011 during a question-and-answer session at Victory Base Complex, Iraq. Panetta answered questions from several Soldiers, including queries on Iran's role in supplying insurgent groups and the possibility of American forces staying in the country after the end of this year. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Daniel Stoutamire, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)*



## 4TH OF JULY NATURALIZATION

*Pfc. Alejandro Solorzano-Castaneda, left, a combat engineer with Company C, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd "Dagger" Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division and a Mexico native, takes the oath of citizenship during a naturalization ceremony July 4, 2011 at Camp Victory, Iraq. Twelve Soldiers with the brigade became naturalized citizens at the ceremony, the last to be held in Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Daniel Stoutamire, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)*



## BRIGADE MEDIC COMPETITION

*Soldiers with the 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division navigate through a water obstacle during the litter-carry obstacle course during the brigade's Best Medic Competition June 19, 2011 at Camp Liberty, Iraq. Teams representing battalions from around the brigade participated in the competition, designed to mimic the Army's Expert Field Medical Badge course. (U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. Tameka Hall, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)*





# THE DAGGER EDGE

## IN MEMORIAM

### OPERATION NEW DAWN 2010 - 2011

SFC CLIFFORD E. BEATTIE

*3 January 1974 - 22 May 2011*

SPC MICHAEL B. COOK

*6 June 1984 - 6 June 2011*

PFC RAMON MORA JR.

*20 August 1991 - 22 May 2011*

SPC EMILIO J. CAMPO

*11 May 1991 - 6 June 2011*

SPC CHRISTOPHER B. FISHBECK

*7 October 1986 - 6 June 2011*

PFC MICHAEL C. OLIVIERI

*16 August 1984 - 6 June 2011*

SPC MARCOS A. CINTRON

*19 May 1979 - 16 June 2011*

SPC ROBERT P. HARTWICK

*6 March 1991 - 6 June 2011*

SPC JOSE A. TORRE

*16 June 1989 - 15 January 2011*