



## Sheiks Say No to Violence, Yes to Reconciliation

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp  
1-1 Cav. Div. Public Affairs

ASSIRIYAH, Iraq -- Sunni and Shia tribal sheiks, local government leaders, senior Iraqi Army officials and local Iraqi Police officials from throughout the Taji area, met here Dec. 6 at the prayer town hall to continue reconciliation efforts and celebrate the "awakening"—a term used to describe a turning away from sectarianism and violence.

More than 200 attendees from the villages of Hor Al Bosh, Sheik Ahmer, Shat Al Taji, Falahat and other areas dined as they discussed issues affecting their villages and ways in which they can improve the quality of life for the people living there.

"They decided to have a Sawa or lunch to bring both Sunni and Shia tribal leaders together for solidarity," said Anchorage, Alaska native Capt. Martin Wohlgenuth, commander for Troop D, 1st



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

**A tribal sheik (right) pauses to count his prayer beads during a reconciliation meeting Dec. 6 in Assiriyah, Iraq.**

Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment which is attached to the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment. "This is a continued extension of the Sunni and Shia partnership which has truly

spread to every corner of North Taji."

"As the security situation continues to improve, Sunnis are able to travel to mainly Shia areas and the Shia can go to

Sunni areas. In many cases, these are places they have never been before or never dared to go before," added Wohlgenuth, whose troops patrol in Assiriyah. "They are only able to do this because of reconciliation and forgiveness. This is a continued sign of progress."

Some local villagers also attended the meeting and had the opportunity to meet with some of the local leaders and area tribal sheiks.

"This is a very good sign and there's lots of good representation here. We will continue to say no to sectarianism and yes to reconciliation," said Tariq Daee Al Teaa, a local man invited to the meeting. "The terrorists have tried to take our happiness from us by attempting to kill and kidnap our children and that's rubbish. We must try to work toward good things to end violence and by doing this, we can eventually become the best country in the Arab world."

## Almost Home: 'Lobos' Case Colors for Redeployment

By Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert  
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – A 1st Air Cavalry "Warrior" Brigade unit cased its colors Dec. 10, signaling the end of its mission in Iraq.

The 2nd "Lobo" Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st ACB, 1st Cavalry Division, provided general aviation support for Multi-National Division-Baghdad from October 2006 to December, according to San Antonio native Maj. Michael

Price, battalion operations officer.

The battalion conducted a fuel and rearming point mission, distinguished visitor transportation within Baghdad, heavy lift capabilities for cargo and personnel and the air medical evacuation mission for what was one of the most volatile areas in Iraq, Price said.

The battalion's Company C, 2-227th General Support Aviation Battalion, evacuated more than 5,500 patients from four multinational divisions in Iraq over a peri-

od that included the surge of troops.

In all, the battalion conducted more than 11,500 missions. It transported more than 120,000 passengers and nearly 10,000 pallets of cargo. The battalion's fuelers pumped more than 3 million gallons of fuel over the course of the deployment.

The battalion's UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters were used to support distin-

# 'Lobos' Get Set for Home with Color Casing

Homeward  
From Page 1

guished visitor and commanding general transportation and MEDEVAC operations. The unit's CH-47 Chinook helicopters were the workhorses of MND-B, moving personnel and cargo.

The wide scope of the missions and their importance to successful operations within MND-B kept the Soldiers on the ball, Price said.

"I'm proud of all the missions we performed here," he said. "Because we had such a busy mission, it kept everyone focused on the mission."

The brief color casing ceremony meant it was time for the hardworking Lobos to breathe a collective sigh of relief.

"The ceremony showed the end to the mission," Price said. "With this, we can stop focusing on the missions for (1st Cav. Div.) and start focusing on redeploying."

In remarks during the ceremony, Lt. Col. Christopher Joslin told his Soldiers they should be proud of what they accomplished in Iraq.

"When you guys leave here; when you are home safe ... you stand tall, and you stand proud and tell people about the team



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

**Lt. Col. Christopher Joslin, commander of 2nd "Lobo" Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, (left), and 1st Sgt. Terrance O'Neal, the acting battalion command sergeant major, (center), case the unit's colors in a ceremony Dec. 10 at Taji, Iraq. Most of the battalion's Soldiers will return to Fort Hood, Texas, by Christmas, with the entire battalion getting home by mid January.**

you were with here," said Joslin, a native of Reno, Nev.

Most of the battalion's Soldiers will be

home by Christmas with the entire battalion redeployed to Fort Hood by mid January, Price said.

Arabic Word  
of the Day

Yajebu an  
athaba al aan!

Defined:  
I have to go

## Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 69  
Low: 51



Tomorrow

High: 69  
Low: 51



Monday

High: 66  
Low: 50

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# Iraqi Army Helps Boy Recover from Al Qaeda Attack

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp  
1-1 Cav. Div. Public Affairs

AL AWAD, Iraq – With bullets having shattered the life he once knew along with the bones in the upper part of his leg nearly four months ago, 7-year-old Saddam, a local Iraqi boy, is receiving help with his recovery from Iraqi Army medics serving in the 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized).

The Iraqi medics are taking the lead in coordinating healthcare for the boy, who suffered wounds when Al Qaeda operatives orchestrated a drive-by shooting near his Al Awad home that left his 4-year-old sister dead. Continuing their relations within the community, the Iraqi soldiers provided an ambulance to transport Saddam to the 86th Combat Support Hospital (CSH) in Baghdad for a Dec. 5 follow-up appointment.

Along with taking Saddam to the capital city for treatment, the 3rd Bde., 9th IA Div. (Mech.) medics also coordinated with Saddam's family for the transport as well as enlisting the help of Soldiers from the 930 Military Transition Team, who served in a minimal advisory role to the Iraqi medics and as security escorts in the convoy to the International Zone where the CSH is located.

"Things like this really show the Iraqi people in our area of operations, that the Iraqi Army is there to help them," said Lancaster, Mass., native Maj. Eric Ogborn, brigade military transition team operations officer for the 930 Military Transition Team. "It gives them confidence in the Iraqi Army and that Iraqi soldiers are committed to the families living here."

Since the beginning of Saddam's treatment, the 930 MTT has been coordinating with the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment—a battalion that operates in Al Awad, Hor Al Bosh and other areas with its 3rd Brigade Iraqi Army counterparts. Both units worked to assist the 3rd Bde., 9th IA Div. (Mech.) in aiding the boy and his family and transitioning much of the responsibility for his care to the Iraqi medics.

"It (what happened to the boy and his family) was a really a horrible thing and an intentional act (by Al Qaeda operatives) done to intimidate the locals through fear," said

Staff Sgt. Aaron Rushford, who hails from Winthrob, N.Y., while explaining that the extremist group's tactics to keep the locals under their thumb, didn't work. "These kind of acts have instead reinforced with the Iraqi people a need to stand up to Al Qaeda and other terrorist threats."

"When we first came across Saddam and his sister, who died later from complications due to a gunshot wound to the stomach, there was a flood of emotions," said Stafford, Va., native Lt. Col. Mike Loew, brigade MTT chief. "Almost everyone had tears in their eyes, and everyone, since then, has done their part to help out. The hardest part of the whole thing for the family has been the loss of the sister."

"The Iraqi Army provides the means and the U.S. provides the escorts, so everybody plays a little role and the boy gets the treatment that he needs," said Rushford.

When the Iraqi ambulance arrived at the CSH, three Iraqi medics attended Saddam, ensuring he was comfortable before wheeling him via a gurney into the CSH, where a U.S. staff of orthopedic technicians and radiological experts examined him.

The day's trip to the CSH marked Saddam's third check up after receiving surgery at the hospital to heal the broken bones in the upper part of his leg to which an external fixator is affixed—a device consisting of metal rods that keep the bones in place so they can heal properly.

"He has a lot of bone matter to generate, it was not an average break," said Rushford.

"He may require further surgery to help fuse the bones," said Staff Sgt. Marcell Jones, a medic with the 930 MTT who hails from Williamsburg, Va.

Yet even with all the different diagnoses, the medical experts working on the boy are hopeful for his recovery.

"One of the doctors said she hopes to see him playing soccer in February," said Loew, also adding that Saddam, despite all that has befallen him, has remained in good spirits.

Once Saddam's visit to the CSH was over, the Iraqi medics helped answer questions that the family had about his treatment—such as the best ways to redress and clean the boy's wound and the proper dosage for medications that the boy takes to stave off



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1-1 Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

**An Iraqi Army medic from the 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) wheels 7-year-old Saddam, a boy from the village of Al Awad, Iraq, down a hallway to get an X-ray at the 86th Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad Dec. 5.**

infection. They will also help the family coordinate for the boy's future treatment.

"The IAs really get into doing this and you can see in their eyes that it's really very rewarding from their perspective," said Loew. "The family has been extremely grateful for the care that they have received."

"This has been really awesome for the advancement of cohesion between the Iraqi Army and Iraqi civilians," said Jones. "I feel really good about it and our role in helping these guys stand up their country on their own and help their own people."

Over the course of his treatment, Saddam has been showered with gifts from both Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers to include soccer balls, a teddy bear, toy cars and candy.

As Saddam is recovering, so it seems the sectarian rifts that once plagued his hometown of Al Awad with extremist violence are also healing, according to Maj. Chris Kuhn, a battalion 0930 MTT team chief.

"We've definitely seen a decrease in violence in the area," said Kuhn, who hails from Middletown, Pa. "There have been a lot of positive changes and it's a good thing to see."

**Last at Bat from Baghdad****Chest-thumping Thrill of Victory Touted in Final Column**

A few weeks ago I spent a good part of my weekly column trash-talking and reveling in my success at picking the winners in the National Football League.

In this, my last column from Baghdad, I end on a high note with a season-best 14-2 showing in Week 14! My only two misses were NFC South Division-leading Tampa Bay dropping one on the road to the Houston Texans, 28-14, and the Arizona Cardinals getting put to sleep in Seattle, 42-21. Of course, I whiffed on Thursday night's game, as the Texans buried the Broncos, 31-13.

**Hall of Shame**

The Mitchell Report came out Thursday with some big names on the "substance abuse list." Barry Bonds was on it, of course, but so were Roger Clemens, Andy Pettitte, Miguel Tejada, and Gary Sheffield, among other not-so-greats.

The "Rocket" has denied doping.

There's lots of 'roid rage in baseball. This story will play out long after the current crop of players have retired, with the black cloud of steroid use haunting hall of fame nominees for years.

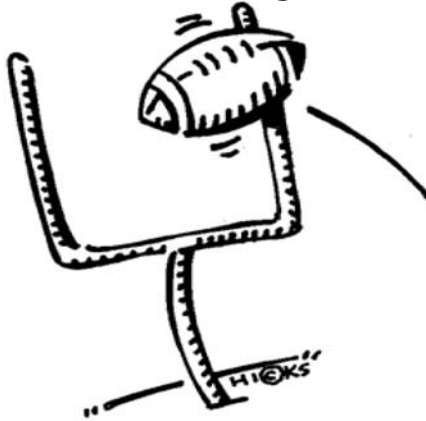
My call: if they have the proof that these guys used illegal performance-enhancing drugs, please keep them out of the hall of fame. But enough about baseball, let's get to the gridiron!

**Game of the Week**

The legend of Dallas Cowboy quarterback Tony Romo grew a bit when he led his 'Boys to a 28-27 come-from-behind victory in Detroit. He was Tom Brady, reincarnate.

The Lions had this one. They were running the ball well (152 yards and three rushing touchdowns!); they kept the Dallas pass rush off quarterback Jon Kitna (only one sack in an unusually balanced Mike Martz offensive attack); they played well enough to win on both sides of the ball ... for 58 minutes.

Their biggest mistake was to give the ball back to Dallas with enough time on the clock. Romo capped the fourth-quar-

**Trigger Pull**

**Master Sgt.  
Dave Larsen**



ter two-minute winning drive by hitting tight end Jason Witten with a 16-yard bullet with 18 seconds left in the game. That tied it up. Nick Folk's extra point won it for Big D.

Witten ended up with 15 catches for 138 yards and that fourth quarter score and Romo threw for 302 yards, connecting on 35 for 44 passes. Dallas remains the dominant force in the NFC at 12-1.

**Whoopin' in Week 14**

There were a bevy of blow-outs in the NFL last week, with the New England Patriots leading the way with a 34-13 pummeling of the Pittsburgh Steelers. Steelers' safety Anthony Smith "guaranteed" a victory in Foxboro, Mass. Tom Brady, Randy Moss, Wes Welker, et al, made him eat those words. Smith was burned twice in the game by Brady bombs.

"We've played against a lot better safeties than him," said Pats' coach Bill Belichick during the post-game interview session. (Well, shut my mouth!)

Indianapolis beat up Baltimore just one week after the Ravens gave Brady and the Pats all they could handle. This one wasn't close, 44-20, as Peyton Manning

threw for four touchdowns in a little more than half the game, and gave way to his caddie, Jim Sorgi, midway through the third quarter.

Other notable blow-outs were the Broncos blasting the Chiefs, 41-7; Jacksonville clipping Carolina, 37-6; the Vikings running roughshod over the 49ers, 27-7; and the Packers routing the Raiders, 38-7.

**Pigskin Pickin'**

With the success I had in Week 14, I should probably quit now. But writing a sports column (and hopefully, for you, reading it) is addictive. Sgt. Michael Molinaro from the 4th Infantry Division will be prying it out of my clenched fists next week to take over the duty, as I go kicking and screaming to Kuwait and then onward to Central Texas and the land of the truly, big PX!

I expect to be sitting in Kuwait when most of these ballgames get played. I'll probably miss every snap as I catch a nap waiting for the final flight home.

Speaking of home, here's who I expect to hold home field advantage this week: Cleveland takes down the Bills; New England scores 70, in the first half, against the visiting Jets; New Orleans slips by Arizona; Pittsburgh wins a tight one against Jacksonville, which is probably a playoff preview; Tampa Bay thumps Atlanta; San Diego slaps Detroit; and on Monday Night Football, Minnesota inches ever closer to a very surprising playoff appearance (where they will get demolished in the wild card round) by beating on the Bears.

Besides the First Team, here's are some NFL teams hitting the road this week who are winners, too: Cincinnati further embarrasses the 49ers; Seattle clobbers Carolina; the Titans take down the Chiefs in Kansas City; Baltimore bullies Miami; Indianapolis rips the Raiders; Washington slips by the Giants in a slight upset; the Eagles soar in Dallas in my upset special of the week; and Green Bay roasts the Rams in St. Louis.

Go Packers!