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the STATIC LINE





the **STATIC LINE**



CULTURAL AWARENESS: *ASHURA*

Shia Muslims around the world observe Ashura on Jan. 28; the day commemorating the death of Husayn ibn Ali – Muhammad's grandson. Ashura is observed the 10th of Muharram, the first month of the Islamic year – Ashura literally means "tenth."

Ashura is a major festival for Shia Muslims. Husayn, pronounced Hussein, was the son of Imam Ali – Muhammad's cousin – and Fatima – Muhammad's daughter.

After attempting to depose the ruling Umayyad Clan, Husayn fled to Karbala. Husayn and his followers were besieged for their refusal to accept the Umayyad caliph, Yazid, as the legitimate ruler of Islam. On Oct. 10, 680, the Umayyad army killed all 70 of Husayn's group, including women

and children. It is reported that their naked and beheaded bodies were left in the open as a reminder to others who may rebel.

The deaths of Husayn and his father solidified the schism between Shia and Sunni Muslims. Their deaths gave rise to a cult of martyrdom within Shia Islam with a sense of betrayal and struggle against oppression. For Shia, Ashura commemorates Husayn's struggle against injustice, tyranny, and oppression.

Shia men display public expressions of mourning and grief by self-flagellation, beating their head, or cutting their body. Such acts are intended to connect them with Husayn's suffering and death as an aid to salvation on the Day of Judgment. Women dress in black and

process through the streets chanting and praying aloud.

Shias make pilgrimage to the Mashhad al-Husayn shrine in Karbala, which is believed to be Husayn's tomb. There are re-enactments, speeches, and special prayers. The commemoration of the Battle of Karbala is an eleven day remembrance. The period of mourning is ended with Arba'een, which means "fortieth day" – Mar. 9 to Mar. 18.

Saddam Hussein banned these events during his reign because he believed the Shias would use Ashura to subvert and undermine his rule.

Attacks against Shia mosques and shrines during this period worsened the divide between Shias and Sunnis in Iraq, as they did last year when terrorists destroyed the Golden Mosque.

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the Static Line welcomes columns, commentaries, articles, and photographs from our readers. Send submissions to Staff Sgt. Michael J. Carden at crdn.carden@us.army.mil. We reserve the right to edit for security, accuracy, propriety, policy, clarity, and space.

Iraqi students receive school supplies



Photo by Spc. Joshua R. Ford/ 82nd Abn Div PAO

1st Sgt. Jeffery Vollmer, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, greets an Iraqi student with a handshake Dec. 26 at a school in a small village outside of Tikrit.

Spc. Joshua R. Ford
3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

TIKRIT, Iraq - Paratroopers from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, distributed hundreds of dollars worth of school supplies to Iraqi school children Dec. 26 in the elementary schools of two small villages outside of Tikrit.

Paratroopers from Battery A surprised the

Iraqi school children in the middle of class with the gifts. Each child received a bag containing pencils, pens, markers, paper, folders and numerous other types of school supplies.

School children from Menasha, Wis., were the reason the Iraqi students received these supplies.

1st Sgt. Jeffery Vollmer, Battery A, coordinated the project with a lot of help from his good friend Troy Wittmann, an 8th grade teacher of United States History at Maplewood Junior High School in Menasha.

In September Wittmann designed a program for Maplewood students and teachers to donate supplies.

Once the Maplewood students and history teachers gathered the school supplies, they were mailed from Menasha to Iraq at a postage cost of around \$250.

When Vollmer's parents asked him what he wanted for Christmas, he said all he wanted was for them to cover the postage costs for mailing the school supplies.

"Next year (Christmas) will be for me; this year was for (the Iraqi children)," said Vollmer.

Vollmer and Wittmann have been very good friends since they were children growing up in Menasha and have supported each other's careers - Wittmann as a teacher and Vollmer as a Paratrooper, but this is the first time they have had the opportunity to work with one another, said Vollmer.

"I just wanted (the Iraqi children) to take away that these school supplies weren't from the government, they weren't from the Army; they were from (American children) - children just like them on the other side of the world," said Vollmer.

"Sooner or later, (American) children are going to be the ones to inherit our country, and (Iraqi children) are going to be the kids to inherit this country," added Vollmer. "I think the Iraqi children are seeing a lot of changes in their country, and I think a whole lot of it's probably not positive. So by doing this sends a positive message to the children of Iraq."

Troops inform citizens of operations in Samarra

Sgt. Michael Tuttle
5th MPAD

SAMARRA, Iraq - A group of 82nd Airborne Division Paratroopers met with local merchants Dec. 29 at their storefronts along Thar Thar Road outside the city to inform them about operations in the area.

The talks are part of efforts by Company A, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, to counter rumors and misinformation spread by insurgents to the local Iraqi public, said Capt. Adisa King, the company's commander.

"It's a chance to tell the public what we're about," said 1st Lt. Daniel Robbins, platoon leader. "We can give them information directly so they understand what our purpose is and that we're fighting for their security."

Robbins first made sure that the merchants understood the need for his platoon to block off the street in front of their stores while they spoke. He described the dangers of vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices and explained why local drivers must stop at cordons.

The area near the businesses on Thar Thar Road has been a hot spot for insurgent activity; including five to eight IED attacks there per month, according to Robbins. The merchants were also informed of a large weapons cache uncovered recently in the area.

This exchange of information will hopefully build more trust and cooperation among the Soldiers and the locals.

"We are trying to gather information and learn about them, as

see **THAR THAR**, page 2

Iraqi soldiers graduate first ever NCO Academy

Capt. Aydin Mohtashamian
3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

TIKRIT, Iraq - The first-ever class of the 9th Strategic Infrastructure Battalion's non-commissioned officer academy graduated 40 newly promoted NCOs, Dec. 7 after three weeks of hands-on training,



Photo by Capt. Kenneth Cosgriff/TF Loyalty
Iraqi non-commissioned officers from the 9th Strategic Infrastructure Battalion practice their marksmanship skills Dec. 7 during a three-week long NCO academy.

THAR THAR

well as make it clear why it's important for them to fight the insurgency," said Robbins.

Robbins handed out tip cards to the merchants that included his unit's contact information in Arabic. He offered to help them if their businesses faced any type of threat.

"We will fight for you, but we need you to help us out," Robbins told a group of merchants before moving on. "You're out here all the time. If you see anything, give us a call."

The tip cards have been an effective way to continue communicating with locals.

"We have gotten calls fairly frequently," Robbins said. "Sometimes they're scared to give us information on the street and feel safer talking on the phone."

multiple written tests, and weapon's qualifications.

The 9th SIB's main mission is to provide infrastructure security in Salah ad Din Province; specifically the main power lines between Bayji and Baghdad, as well as oil pipelines running throughout the province.

The 9th SIB consists of three separate companies and a battalion headquarters; each of which sent 10 of their best soldiers to attend the academy.

Paratroopers from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, partnered with the leaders of the 9th SIB to advise them on how to develop the academy.

"The (Iraqis) really led the effort in creating the academy," said Maj. Joseph Harris, commander of Battery A. "With minimal assistance from us, they established their own training plan and concept to build and develop NCOs within their organization."

Throughout the three week course, the NCOs learned about first-aid classes, intelligence gathering, land navigation, and other essential military skills.

"The main point of the class was to get their NCOs ready to lead soldiers. The class taught them many different skills,

and now they will teach these to their soldiers," said Harris.

"The training has greatly enhanced the 9th SIB capabilities, as they now have more NCOs to enforce the standards and lead their soldiers on combat patrols to guard the pipelines," Harris noted.

The training culminated on graduation day when the NCOs tested their marksmanship with their AK-47s. As a bonus, Battery A gave a class on the M240B, a fully automatic machinegun.

"The range was probably one of the most well run ranges I've ever seen. It had structure, and there was a command issued for every movement and action," said Harris.

After the range, the new NCOs were congratulated by the 9th SIB Commander, Col. Hamid Mandal Zaher.

"Continue to train and mentor our fine soldiers. You are our leaders and will ensure the soldiers' needs are met," said Hamid.

Noting the great improvement in his NCOs, Hamid stated he recently sent several of his NCOs to the 4th Iraqi Army Division-level-leadership training for NCOs. His NCOs were selected as top graduates, and they were commended by the 4th IA commander for their professionalism.



Photo by Sgt. Michael Tuttle/5th MPAD
Paratroopers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, talk with merchants about security Dec. 29 in front of their produce store outside of Samarra.

Iraqi troops learn U.S. Army's training method

Task Force Panther Paratroopers teach week-long 'Train-the-Trainer' course

Sgt. Antonietta Rico
5th MPAD

FOB Danger, Iraq - Senior non-commissioned officers from the Iraqi army's 1st Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division, graduated from a week-long professional development course Dec. 7 during a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Danger.

In line with United States efforts to train the Iraqi army to the point of self-reliance, Paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division's 3rd Brigade Combat Team fielded the train-the-trainer course. The concept of the brand new course is to teach Iraqi NCOs and some warrant officers, core army skills they can in turn teach to their own soldiers.

"It will give them a foundation they can use to develop soldiers... taking them from a private and bringing them into the NCO ranks," said 1st Sgt. Richard Lopez, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, and one of the instructors for the course.

Through the pilot course the Airborne Brigade is trying to strengthen the

Iraqi army's NCO Corps, which is underdeveloped, said Lopez.

The impact of the training provided by the train-the-trainer course can be extensive. Senior level Iraqi NCOs can mentor entry level Soldiers, laying the groundwork for a stronger NCO Corps, and

impressed by his student's determination and core knowledge.

"There were some extremely knowledgeable NCOs in that group. They were extremely eager to learn everything that we could teach them," he said.

"It's good to see that they are willing and

"Learn these lessons well; for the day will arrive when you will have to fight the enemies of Iraq by yourself."

-Col. Bryan Owens, commander of
Task Force Panther in Iraq's Salah ad Din Province

establishing a mentoring mentality within the Iraqi army, Lopez said.

"If we feed them the right knowledge and get them to experience the things that we know as NCOs, it will allow them to develop their NCO Corps which will make their army a lot stronger," Lopez said.

Course curriculum included basic rifle marksmanship, maintenance, urban combat training, first aid and communications.

Lopez said he did not know what to expect from the Iraqi NCOs, and was

they want to step up, they want to learn, they want that knowledge so that they can go back and teach their soldiers," Lopez added.

Col. Bryan Owens, 3rd BCT commander, stressed at the ceremony the importance of applying the knowledge the Iraqi NCOs gained during the course. He reminded the graduating NCOs of the gravity facing them.

"Learn these lessons well; for the day will arrive when you will have to fight the enemies of Iraq by yourself," Owens said.

Foregoing the speaker's podium during the ceremony, 3rd BCT Command Sgt. Maj. Bryant Lambert simply faced the graduating students and spoke to them, from one senior NCO to another.

"You and I are noncommissioned officers. We lead by example. We lead our Soldiers into combat without fear..." Lambert said. "We use our initiative, our leadership, our knowledge, and we accomplish the mission."

Lambert drew from his own experience as a senior NCO to advise the Iraqi NCOs.

"Everything that we teach our Soldiers we must master ourselves, for if we do not master the skills, how can we train our own Soldiers?" he said.

Gen. Abdul Jabaar, 1st Brigade, 4th IA Division commander, spoke to the graduating NCOs, repeating to them an old Iraqi saying; "sweat during training will minimize blood in the battlefield."

"All I hope from you is that you apply every single detail you learned here," Gen. 'AJ' said to the NCOs. He asked them to take the initiative and establish internal schools within their units to carry on the knowledge they gained.



Photo by Sgt. Antonietta Rico/ 5th MPAD

From left: Command Sgt. Maj. Bryant Lambert and Col. Bryan Owens, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division; the 4th Iraqi Army Division command sergeant major, and Gen. Abdul Jabaar, commander of the 4th Iraqi Army Division, congratulate a non-commissioned officer with the 1st Brigade, 4th IA Dec. 7 at Forward Operating Base Danger upon completion of the week-long Train-the-Trainer Course.

Iraqi doctors take steps to improve healthcare

Spc. Amanda Jackson
3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

TIKRIT, Iraq - *The Canon of Medicine* was written by ancient Islamic physician Ibn Sina circa 1022 b.c. and became a reference for European doctors throughout the Middle Ages – a time when Islam was among the most advanced cultures in the field of medicine.

Western medicine still credits Sina's work to be the most influential medical reference book of ancient history, according to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Despite twenty years of regression the field suffered during Saddam Hussein's regime, individuals of Islamic nations, such as Iraq, continue to follow in Sina's footsteps.

Healthcare professionals in Iraq's Salah ad Din Province identified issues and steps for improvements during a Medical Symposium Dec. 14 in Tikrit, which was held to recollect the dark ages in which they fell behind and muse over the progression of medicine in Iraq.

"The doctors were not only segregated but excluded from all the advancements that happened over the twenty years," said Dr. Hatem Mukhlis, an ear doctor with more than twenty years experience as a general surgeon in upstate New York. Now he is practicing in Tikrit to help facilitate the improvement of Iraqi healthcare.

"The field improves and changes by the month, if not by the week," said Mukhlis. "So we can imagine how far medicine was behind [all these] years from the complete exclusion of the

advancement of the world."

Mukhlis is originally from Tikrit. Though he has worked in the U.S. for years and speaks fluent English with a barely-intelligible accent, his conviction is derived from his professional experiences in both nations.

Most of Mukhlis' family

able to stay updated in their profession, Meko said. So Army doctors are trying to inform them of what they have missed out on.

The last symposium was focused on trauma. The Iraqi doctors gave presentations on mass-casualty events, burns, and surgical procedures for

and combat lifesavers, their non-commissioned officer corps and nurses.

The largest hospital in the province only has three nurses. The Salah ad Din hospital managers recently opened up a nursing school, which Meko is optimistic about.

"We're trying to get involved in [training nurses] because it's a skill that's so vital to the way we do business and a skill that's vital around the world," he said.

The symposium will improve the most important aspect of a doctor's career: the patient-doctor bond, according to Dr. Mukhlis.

"One way of improving doctors' relationships with their patients is giving them the opportunity to learn of what has happened over these twenty years. How has medicine changed?" Dr. Mukhlis said with a smile, "And it has!"

The doctors are devising ways to overcome the ever-challenging security issues. Transportation of patients from villages to hospitals has been increasingly difficult with bomb-infested roads. In the Medical Symposium, U.S. doctors discussed their solutions for security and transportation of patients.

During the symposium, Dr. Mukhlis reminded his colleagues the journey to a renaissance of medical advancement will be step-by-step.

"We have to start somewhere," Mukhlis said to his fellow healthcare providers. "A thousand-mile march starts with the first step. The task is so complex; it's not an easy task. But it's doable."



Photo by Sgt. Michael Tuttle/ 5th MPAD

An Iraqi doctor speaks about the Teachers Hospital during a medical symposium Dec. 14 at the Salah ad Din Provincial Joint Coordination Center in Tikrit.

was killed by Saddam in the 1990s. Since then, he has felt a moral obligation to Iraq and has brought his "know-how" to his Iraqi counterparts.

Mukhlis attended the Medical Symposium along with ten other doctors and five U.S. Army medical corps officers. This was the second symposium since the Gulf War in the early 1990s; the first one involving only two Iraqi doctors and one U.S. Army doctor, said Maj. Christian Meko, brigade surgeon, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division.

Hopefully, these types of meetings between Iraqi and U.S. doctors are going to be held regularly every four to six weeks, Meko added.

The Iraqi doctors are dedicated and hard-working people, but have not been

trauma. Each symposium will have a different theme; the next one will focus on rehabilitation and medicine. The next; pain management and advances in physical therapy, Meko continued.

"[The Iraqis] experience trauma on a daily basis, unfortunately. They have to know how to handle it, so they've been a very, very receptive audience," Meko said.

The medical corps officers are offering several solutions for their Iraqi colleagues. They are training doctors across the Salah ad Din Province in a continuing medical education program, which is similar to the Medical Symposium, where the doctors lecture each other and have general discussions about the way ahead. They are also training their medics



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael J. Carden/ 3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

A Paratrooper from the 618th Engineer Support Company (Airborne) walks across the dusty, desert terrain Dec. 9 pulling security on the outskirts of Siniyah. The Paratroopers used bulldozers to construct a berm almost around the entire city to isolate terrorists who operate out of it.

Iraqi soldiers and U.S. Paratroopers target terrorists in Siniyah

Staff Sgt. Michael J. Carden
3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

SINIYAH, Iraq - Many terrorists sought a haven here but are now confined to the cordoned city by a 12-foot high berm that wraps eight miles around Siniyah in the shape of a horseshoe. Razor wire outlines the tops of the berm amid surveillance and patrols by Iraqi and U.S. troops.

The only way in or out of the city is through a single, paved road with checkpoints manned by Iraqi army soldiers. The checkpoints have always existed but were reinforced after numerous attacks on security forces and civilians in Siniyah, said Lt. Col. Scott Harris, commander, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment,

82nd Airborne Division.

Siniyah lies in northern Salah ad Din Province and is the first city east of the Syrian Desert's northeastern edge. Because of the city's location, coalition forces believe terrorists find harbor there before filtering to other areas throughout Iraq, Harris continued.

Security in Siniyah began showing signs of weakening Oct. 24 when the police force of more than 100 quit due to terrorist attacks and threats against them and their families. Security didn't show any signs of improvement as the police station was completely destroyed only 13 days later.

"The insurgents had a very strong hold on the city," Harris said. "The entire city council quit; even the mayor resigned.

The increased violence in Siniyah led to a city-wide cordon taking effect Nov. 29. Soldiers from the 4th Iraqi Army Division, and Paratroopers from 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, established the city's current posture to prevent terrorist infiltration and escape, Harris said.

Paratroopers from the 618th Engineer Support Company (Airborne), 20th Engineer Brigade, began constructing the berm. They worked hand-in-hand with their Iraqi engineer counterparts to reinforce the obstacle, according to 1st Lt. Time Hassell, the company's executive officer.

Only those who required urgent medical attention were allowed to leave the city, and no one was allowed to

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SINIYAH

enter. Supply trucks carrying food, water, and heating oil were searched and escorted to drop-off points on the edge of the city inside the cordon.

“People may endure discomfort, but isolating the terrorists is important to the long-term success for security in the city,” Harris said. “There are 29,000 good people in Siniyah, and we just want to help them get a grip back on their lives without fear of terrorism or violence.”

Two weeks passed before troops began clearing Siniyah. They began with more than 500 Iraqi troops from eight different Iraqi army units and a company-size element of Paratroopers from 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Dec. 13 in search for the isolated terrorists.

Initially, Iraqi and U.S. troops stayed in the city for more than 72 hours straight. They searched homes for weapons and terrorists with hasty searches by day and nighttime raids.

Paratroopers from Company C’s 1st Platoon detained 17 suspected terrorists during an early morning raid Dec. 15. The clearing operation totaled more than 80.

During the two weeks of isolation inside the city, insurgent attacks decreased by at least 300 percent. The city’s focus now is to establish a police force to actively patrol, Harris said.

“If Siniyah doesn’t have an enduring security force in the city, it invites wrong-doing,” Harris continued. “I don’t know if we’ll be able to show the people a totally happy and secure population, but we’ve certainly set the conditions for success in the future.”

Siniyah’s western boundary will remain permanently cordoned from the desert. Iraqi and coalition troops will continue to provide security to the outer limits of the city, while the enduring police force patrols the inner, Harris added.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Michael J. Carden/3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO
Staff Sgt. Brett Graves (center), infantryman, Company C, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, and his squad prepare to breach the entrance of a home during an early-morning raid Dec. 15 in Siniyah.



Company commander, Capt. Tim Peterman (left), and Pfc. Bernabe Jimenez, medic, both from Company C, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, place an ace bandage wrap and splint around the arm of an Iraqi boy with a broken arm Dec. 15 in Siniyah.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Michael J. Carden/3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

Above photo: Iraqi police provide overwatch security Dec. 14 on the outskirts of Siniyah. The city was under siege for nearly three weeks as coalition and Iraqi forces searched Siniyah for terrorists and weapons.

Left photo: Spc. Alfonso Caldero, infantryman, Company C, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, carries a mine detector during a patrol Dec. 14 in Siniyah.

Below photo: A bulldozer operated by a Paratrooper from the 618th Engineer Support Company (Airborne) builds a berm Dec. 9 around the outskirts of Siniyah just north of Tikrit. The berm was constructed to isolate the city and trap terrorists who operate out of it.



Paratroopers bring physical therapy to front lines

Spc. Joshua R. Ford
3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

COB SPEICHER, Iraq - Day in and day out, troops patrol the streets and countryside of Iraq for hours at a time; many carrying up to 100 pounds of gear. Over time, this excessive wear on the troops may lead to back or other injuries later on in life.

Fortunately, physical therapy teams are now permanent and internal to each brigade combat team in the Army.

Capt. Andrew Contreras, brigade physical therapist, and Staff Sgt. Melinda Sanders, physical therapy non-commissioned officer, both with Company C, 82nd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, make up the first brigade physical therapy team in the 82nd Abn. Div.

The two keep busy from constant travel to and from outlying forward operating bases throughout 3BCT's area of operation in Salah ad Din Province. Contreras and Sanders have treated more than 1,500 patients – not including the Iraqis they have treated – since they first deployed in August.

Every time the team goes to outlying FOBs, they not only fulfill their obligation to their fellow Paratroopers, but they also treat Iraqi patients and teach them different exercises they can do to help heal their injuries. This has made it convenient



Photo by Spc. Joshua R. Ford/ 82nd Abn Div PAO

Staff Sgt. Melinda Sanders, physical therapist, Company C, 82nd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, treats the ankle of Spc. Patrick Wagner, infantryman, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd BCT, with an ice pack Dec. 29 at Contingency Operations Base Speicher.

to their patients by cracking necks, adjusting backs, and putting bodies back into alignment. The treatment is allowing patients to function in spite of the uncomfortable gear, according to the physical therapy team.

Since the team has been reaching out to Paratroopers, complaints about the body armor have been minimal, said Maj. Christian Meko, brigade surgeon for the 3rd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div.

or running on uneven terrain; mounting and dismounting vehicles and conducting night operations where vision is limited, according to the team.

So far, the physical therapy duo has treated more than 10 Paratroopers who suffered from small arms fire wounds and has kept them all in-country; whereas before, they would have to be flown to Germany for treatment.

The Army's traveling physical therapy teams have been a fantastic addition to the brigades, said Meko. When Paratroopers are injured, the medical team has been able to get them back to the fight a lot quicker.

"A lot of guys have been able to be treated here instead of having to be sent home, keeping combat strength in the battalions higher," said Meko.

"Before we got to the brigade, it would take (injured troops) eight to nine weeks to get back to duty, but with us here, it has gotten most patients back to duty within three weeks," said Contreras.

Contreras and Sanders said they will continue to travel to the outlying bases to provide their convenient services to 82nd Airborne Division Paratroopers, who have a renowned history of being fit and combat-ready.

"Before we got to the brigade, it would take (injured troops) eight to nine weeks to get back to duty. With us here, it has gotten most patients back to duty within three weeks."

-Capt. Andrew Contreras, physical therapist,
Task Force Panther, Salah ad Din Province, Iraq

for all of their patients, said Contreras.

"It is a lot easier for us to move around than it is to move people to see me," said Contreras. "So rather than me sit on Speicher, it's easier to jump on a convoy or catch a flight."

The team spends around 20 days a month traveling. They provide relief

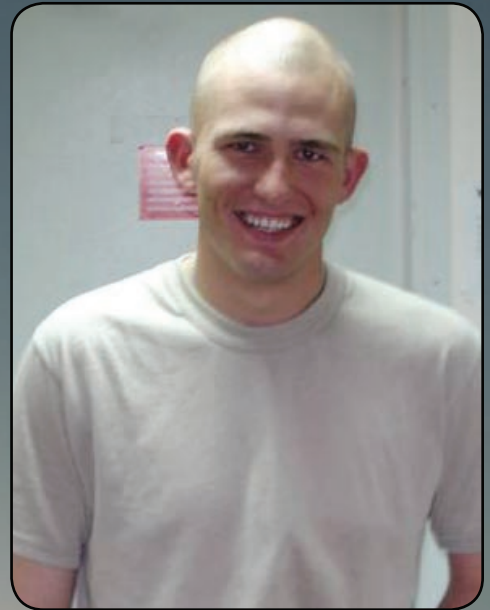
"The most common injuries we see are back problems because of all the equipment we're wearing, the amount of time people are working, and the guys' living conditions [sleeping on cots]," said Contreras.

Other common injuries include ankle and knee problems caused by walking

*IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO MADE
THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE ...*



SPC KENNETH HAINES
KIA, 3-8 CAV
BALAD, IRAQ
MAY 7, 1981 - DEC 3, 2006



PFC TROY COOPER
KIA, 3-8 CAV
BALAD, IRAQ
JAN 9, 1985 - DEC 3, 2006



505th Parachute Infantry Regiment 82nd Airborne Division



All the Way!!
H-Minus!!

