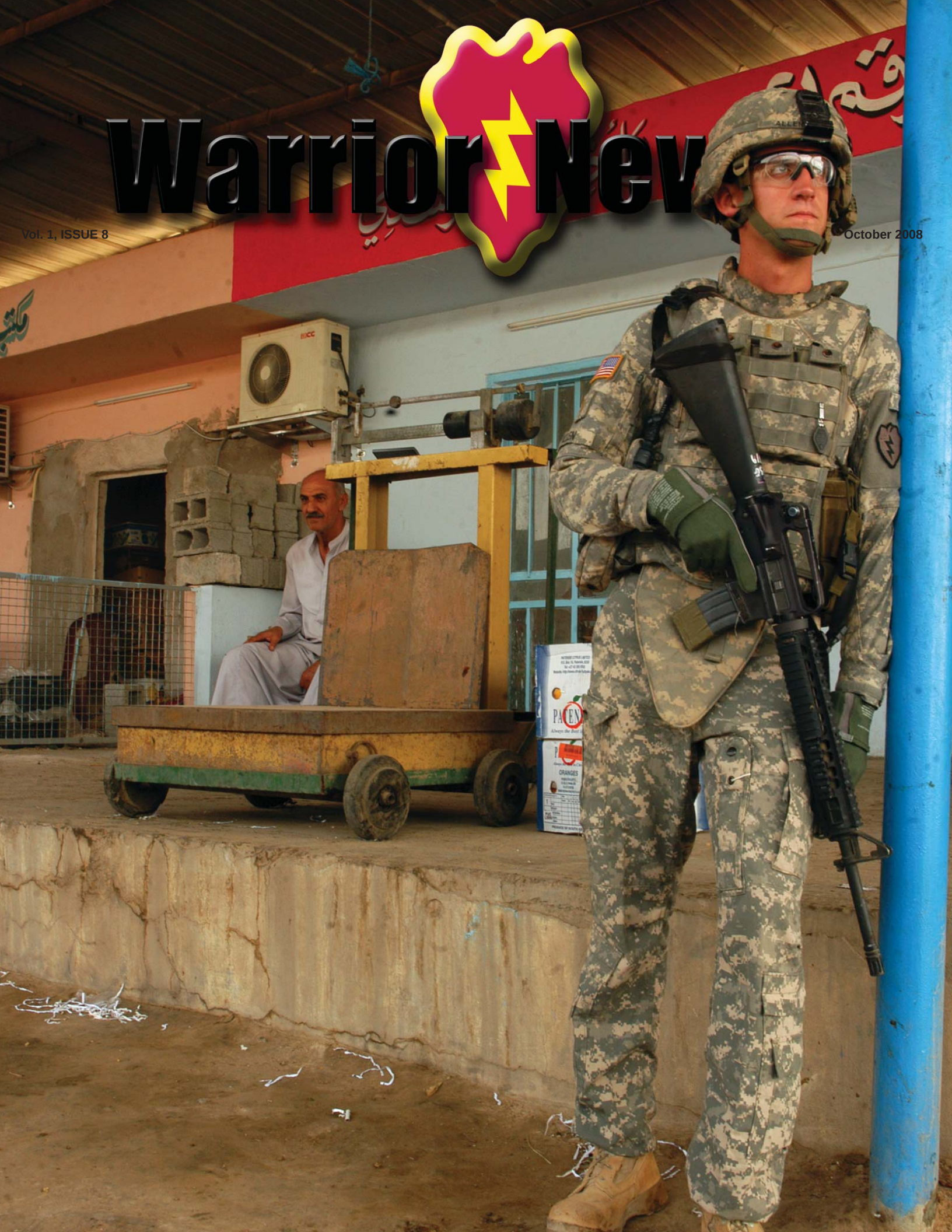


Warrior Nev

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On the Cover.

First Lt. Tom Allen, a native of Jacksonville, Fla., keeps a watchful eye on his surroundings at the Taji Market, northeast of Baghdad, Sept. 27. Allen is a platoon leader for 2nd Squadron 14th cavalry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

U.S. Army photo by
Sgt. 1st Class Christina Bhatti,
2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B

Soldiers treat detainees to traditional Eid Al-Fitr feast

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Christina Bhatti

2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B

Clad in their bright orange scrubs, the men filed into a makeshift dining facility and sat down on bright blue mats.

In front of them was a traditional Eid al-Fitr feast.

The first days of October mark the holiday of Eid al-Fitr, a holiday for signaling the end Ramadan, Islam's holiest month.

Traditionally celebrated with prayer and a feast, Eid al Fitr is a joyous celebration of abundance.

Soldiers from the 225th Brigade Support Battalion "Mongoose," 2nd Stryker Brigade combat Team "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, Multi-national Division – Baghdad, ensured the detainees at the Detainee Holding Area Annex at Camp Taji, northwest of Baghdad, were able to celebrate Eid with a traditional meal Oct. 1.

"This is about respecting their beliefs and treating them with dignity and respect," said Chief Warrant Officer Steven Matzen, a native of Custer, Mich., and officer in charge of the DHAA, 225th BSB.

The traditional fare was prepared by a local contractor who owns restaurants throughout Iraq and prepares daily meals for the facility.

"All I told him was to cook the same food he prepares for his Eid celebration at home," said Capt. Alberto Pantoja, a native of Miami, and commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 225th BSB.

The restaurant owner and contractor came through. There was enough food to feed far more people than those who were going to partake.

Approximately 25 detainees sat down to enjoy the spread of lamb kabobs, rice, salad and fruit.

"We really want to show them that we care," Pantoja said. "We want them to take away that American Soldiers respect them and their religion and will treat them in the best way possible."

Digging into the trays of food, the men seemed to enjoy the feast in front of them. Bellies full and plenty of food still on the trays, they filed back into their cells to continue on with their day.

"We work really hard here," he said. "We do everything we can to ensure these men are taken care of in the best way possible."



A traditional feast was prepared.



Staff Sgt. Paul Moore, a native of Clear Lake, Wis., and food service specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 225th Brigade Support Battalion "Mongoose," 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, prepares to serve food to approximately 25 detainees at the Detainee Holding Area Annex on Camp Taji, northwest of Baghdad, Oct. 1.

GoI takes control of Sol

By Sgt. 1st Class Christina Bhatti
2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B

The Government of Iraq has pledged millions dollars to begin paying the Sons of Iraq (Abna al-Iraq).

Beginning October 1, American taxpayers will no longer foot the bill to support the SoI program that was instrumental in decreasing violence throughout the country.

By the end of November, the Iraqi Army will pay SoI members in Iraqi Dinar, said Maj. J.D. Highfill, deputy team leader, embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team Baghdad – 5, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Approximately 13,000 SoI members man checkpoints and keep watch in the 1,300 square miles of 2nd SBCT’s operational area. This means in that area alone, approximately \$4 million per month will now come from GoI funds instead of U.S. funds.

“When this happens across the country, this will mean a lot of money that stays in taxpayer pockets,” said Maj. Gus Waterhouse, a native of Ewa Beach, Hawaii, and civil affairs officer in charge, 2nd SBCT.

But as may be the case with most transitions, there are potential growing pains involved.

“This is not about the money,” Highfill said, adding the GoI has the resources to adequately and continually pay the SoI members. Highfill said he’s more concerned with the massive administrative challenges the transition presents.

The U.S. Army’s method of tracking SoI membership and activities is new to the IA.

“The Iraqi army has a daunting administrative role ahead, but they are starting to get the right systems in place to administer this process effectively,” said Maj. Jim Craig, a native of St. Louis, Mo., operations officer for 2nd SBCT.

To mitigate this issue, U.S. Soldiers and IA soldiers are



(U.S. Army photo by Maj. Greg Schrein, 53rd MITT, 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B)

A Sons of Iraq (Abna al-Iraq) member completes his registration with a Soldier from the 53rd Military Transition Team, 2nd SBCT in Fira Shia, northwest of Baghdad, Sept. 12.

performing pay missions together to ensure the transition goes smoothly.

Though the GoI will face challenges, Waterhouse said this is a huge step forward for the government.

“They are becoming more involved in taking charge of their security issues – taking responsibility for those who help in security is step in the right direction,” he said. The key to success is the partnership between the U.S. Soldiers and the IA soldiers and a no-fail mindset.

Although the immediate future of the SoI is secure, the situation can still change. Transitioning the SoI in into the Iraqi Security Forces was a goal of Gen. David Petraeus, former commanding general of Multi-National Force – Iraq, but the Shiite-dominated GoI has said it will only accept 20 percent of the mainly Sunni force into the Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army. The proposal is for the remaining 80 percent to be placed by the government into other meaningful jobs throughout the government.

Craig said the U.S. forces will work with the GoI to ensure a successful transition of the SoI members to ensure their futures.



(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Ryan Moorcroft, 2nd Sqdn. 14th Cav. Regt. 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B)

Staff Sgt. Brent Townsend, native of Pasadena, Calif., pays a Sons of Iraq (Abna al Iraq) volunteer during payday activities at Combat Outpost Bassam, northwest of Baghdad, Sept. 18. Each volunteer receives \$300 per month for maintaining security checkpoints along highly trafficked roads in Iraq.



An Iraqi Army Soldier and a Sons of Iraq (Abna al-Iraq) member stand watch side-by-side in the Taji Qada, northwest of Baghdad, March 2. Control of the Sol will transition to the Government of Iraq October 1.

(U.S. Army photo courtesy of 2nd Sqdn. 14th Cav. Regt. 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B)

Sol guards remain on the job

By Ken Griffin
2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B

t’s business as usual for the volunteer security force known as the Sons of Iraq (Abna al Iraq), in Tarmiyah, northwest of Baghdad, as they patrol their city streets night and day.

As Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, “Golden Dragons,” 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad conducted a routine SoI checkpoint recon, Sept. 29, they saw what they always see: SoI guards manning their posts, doing their jobs.

“There hasn’t been any change,” according to Spc. Bryan Austin, a 23-year-old Golden Dragon squad leader from Sandusky, Ohio. “They don’t seem to mind that they’ll be paid by the Iraqi Army instead of us, and they’re still out providing security.”

Although the entire SoI organization is in a transition phase, their mission remains the same and is unlikely to change in the near future, said Capt. Jeremy Clardy, brigade planner, 2nd SBCT. Next month, the security force will fall under Government of Iraq control, drawing pay from the Iraqi Army rather than U.S. forces.

“We’ve registered 96 percent of our SoIs with the Government of Iraq,” Clardy said, also mentioning that under the GoI plan, many SoIs would transition to Iraqi Security Force positions and possibly civilian jobs.

The Sons of Iraq began in Anbar province as the Awakening Council, formed by Sunni Sheik Ahmed Abu Risa and other tribal leaders who tired of unnecessary violence and crime al-Qaeda had forced on them. The movement rapidly spread to other provinces, making its way to Taji Qada.

Many analysts, civilian and military leaders have recognized the SoIs as a key factor in increased security throughout Iraq, and key 1st Bn. 14th Inf. Regt. leaders agree.

“The Sons of Iraq have not only provided security in Tarmiyah, dropping attacks from a few a day to a few a week, but have given the local populace hope, peace of mind and a return to normalcy,” said Capt. Calvin Kline, information operations officer, 2nd SBCT. “They deserve security positions where they’ll be able to continue to provide security ... they’ve made great sacrifices and have proudly served their country.”

In recognition of those sacrifices, 2nd SBCT will continue to monitor the transfer and facilitate a smooth transition, said Kline. In other words, the deterrence against terrorism SoIs provide is not going away any time soon.



Staff Sgt. Corey Burke, a native of Fitzgerald, Ga., who is assigned to the 556th Signal Company, 2nd Brigade Stryker Combat Team "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, demonstrates how to perform immediate action on his rifle for Sgt. Maj. Michael Sedillo, a native of Albuquerque, N.M., the senior operations sergeant for 2nd Battalion, 14th Cavalry Regiment "Strykehorse," 2nd SBCT, during the Audie Murphy Board at Camp Taji, northwest of Baghdad, Sept. 13.



Selected noncommissioned officers from the 2nd SBCT, receive their board introduction briefing from Command Sgt. Major Karl Morgan, a native of Huber Heights, Ohio, the senior enlisted soldier for 2nd SBCT, prior to the start of the Audie Murphy Board at Camp Taji, northwest of Baghdad, Sept. 13.

Warrior NCOs participate in Audie Murphy Board

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Christian Foster
2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B

Seventeen Soldiers from the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, appeared in front of the Audie Murphy Board at Camp Taji, northwest of Baghdad, Sept. 13.

During the board, the Soldiers demonstrated their tactical and technical knowledge to prove they are the best.

"The Audie Murphy Club is an opportunity for (noncommissioned officers) to compete against themselves," said 1st Sgt. Lamont Christian, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y., and first sergeant of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd SBCT.

Each NCO was hand selected from throughout the brigade by their company commanders and battalion command sergeants major to attend the brigade-level board.

In order to meet the recommendation requirements, the Soldiers had to demonstrate certain qualities, such as selfless service and leadership in both the Army and their respective communities.

The standards for induction into the

club by way of the Audie Murphy Board are designed to maintain the integrity of the ideal the club was founded on. The Audie Murphy Club strives to emulate the valor and dedication demonstrated by Murphy, not only during his Army career but in normal life as well.

Induction into this club is an honor all NCOs should seek, said Staff Sgt. Christian Koscinski, a native of Detroit, and a key organizer for the event.

"To be a part (of this club is to be among) some of the best NCOs in the Army," said Koscinski. "(They) have demonstrated their willingness to work 110 percent of the time."

Of the 17 Soldiers who appeared in front of the board, six were recommended for induction into the Audie Murphy Club.

Their packets will now go for review



Sponsors wait impatiently for their respective Soldiers to perform their designated tasks successfully at the Audie Murphy Board hosted by the 2nd SBCT.

by the MND-B chain of command. All Audie Murphy Board packets must have the signed approval of a major general.

The Audie Murphy Club Induction Ceremony, for those accepted for induction, is scheduled for December.



Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, "Gimlets" 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National – Division Baghdad stand next to approximately 1,200 mortars of various sizes in Al Krasheen Village, west of Baghdad, Oct. 4. The Gimlet Soldiers along with Iraqi Army soldiers from 24th Battalion, 6th IA Division, seized 20 weapons caches in Abu Ghuraib during Operation Gimlet Tidal Wave.

Gimlets, IA seize 20 weapons caches

2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers along with Iraqi Army soldiers seized 20 weapons caches during a large-scale clearance operation in Abu Ghuraib, west of Baghdad, Oct. 4.

"This significantly erodes the enemy's capability to do harm to us, the IA and the people in the area," said Lt. Col. Mario Diaz, a native of Sierra Madre, Calif., and commander 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, "Gimlets," 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

The operation, Gimlet Tidal Wave, joined Soldiers from 1st Bn. 21st Inf. Regt. with their IA counterparts from the 24th

Battalion, 6th IA Division.

The search operation targeted historic areas around Abu Ghuraib used by terrorists to plant improvised-explosive devices and transport weapons and fighters to Baghdad.

"This was a good effort on the part of U.S. Soldiers and IA soldiers," Diaz said. "By eliminating these caches, this will now allow us access to areas that we have never

before seen."

The munitions seized included more than 1,700 mortar rounds, 503 mortar fuses, three rocket launchers, six rockets, a 107mm rocket, a 76mm rocket, 52 Dishka rounds, 20 .50-cal. rounds, six five-gallon buckets of homemade explosive material, a 55 gallon of unknown substance, an unknown improvised explosive device, an IED made from two 133mm mortars, a high-explosive dual purpose 40mm round, a cell phone and nine SA-7 heat-seeking, shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles.

Explosive ordnance disposal teams performed controlled detonations at the cache sites.



(U.S. Photo courtesy of Capt. Joe Dumas, 2nd Sqdn. 14th Cav. Regt., 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B)

Warrior Pride

(From left to right) Sgt. Maj. Michael Sedillo, operations sergeant major, Lt. Col. Thomas Mackey, squadron commander and 1st Sgt. Leonard Calmes, Troop C first sergeant, all from 2nd Squadron 14th Cavalry Regiment, "Strykehorse," 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, "Warrior," Multi-National Division – Baghdad, proudly display the symbol of the 25th Infantry Division, Sept. 17. The "Tropic Lightning" symbol was painted on the helipad at Combat Outpost Falahat, northwest of Baghdad.

32 Soldiers participate in Honolulu Century Ride in Iraq

By Sgt. 1st Class Christina Bhatti

2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B

The Honolulu Century Bike Ride rode into Camp Taji, northwest of Baghdad, Sept. 28.

Thirty-two Soldiers lined their bikes up before dawn to participate in a 25, 50, 75 or 100-mile courses. The course was one 12 and a half-mile loop. Each 100-mile rider had to complete eight laps.

The ride at Camp Taji was the same day as the ride in Honolulu, only 13 hours earlier and was a way to stay in touch with the state.

“I wanted to stay connected to the people in Hawaii,” said Maj. Chris Hanna, a native of Columbia, S.C. and effects coordination officer, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Hanna brought the, 27-year old ride, the oldest bike ride in Hawaii, to Iraq for the first time. He participated in the ride in Honolulu last year and said he wanted to bring a piece of home to Iraq.

He did it with some help.

“There was a lot of coordination with the units here and the Hawaii Bicycle League back in Honolulu,” he said.

The coordination paid off. Not only was there a “great turnout,” he said, there were many Soldiers who volunteered to help make the ride a success.

Approximately, 40 volunteers helped in many different capacities. They handed out water and snacks, helped riders repair their bikes when they had issues, and ensured accountability of the riders.

“This is exciting and unusual,” said Air Force Lt. Col. Sterett Prevost, a native of Shreveport, La., and Electronics Warfare Officer, 2nd SBCT. “We are basically doing the same thing as Honolulu ..., and this is an exciting and unique opportunity.”

Prevost was in charge of base operations and ensured all riders were accounted for and had “the safest possible ride and the most enjoyable possible ride,” he said.

The riders lined up at 5:30 a.m. There was a blend of riders of all levels and ages. Some serious, with all the best bike gear money can buy and many recreational riders just there for a good time. As

different as the riders who participated, the bikes showcased their differences and creative abilities. Some of the bikes were “homemade” on Camp Taji, piecing together different bikes to make one.

Spc. Alyxander Reynolds, a native of Hugoton, Kan., and Soldier assigned to 1st Sustainment Brigade, MND-B built two bikes reminiscent of a chopper motorcycles.

“I just wanted to build a bike that was comfortable and reflects my style,” Reynolds said. Reynolds signed up to ride 100 miles, but only completed 37.5 miles on his two custom built bikes. In the future he said he hopes for sponsorship by Orange County Choppers, Orange County, N.Y., and will ride annually in the Honolulu Century Ride.

Approximately 13 hours after the start, the last rider crossed the finish line completing the eighth lap and 100 miles.

“Some of it was rough,” Hanna said after finishing 100 miles in just over 7 hours, “but it was a good experience.”



(U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. Christian Foster, 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B)

Thirty two service members from Camp Taji, Iraq, northwest of Baghdad, take a group photo before the start of the Honolulu Century Ride in Iraq, Sept. 28. The event allowed riders to participate in a 25, 50, 75 or 100-mile ride. The event coincided with the Honolulu Century ride.



Members of the Toa O Taji, a dance group comprised of Soldiers from the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, send off the 32 participants in the Honolulu Century Ride in Iraq with a traditional Hawaiian Haka dance for good luck, at Camp Taji, northwest of Baghdad, Sept. 28.



Participants in the Honolulu Century Ride in Iraq enjoy the scenery of Camp Taji, northwest of Baghdad, during their ride Sept. 28. The event allowed riders to participate in a 25, 50, 75 or 100-mile ride. The event coincided with the Honolulu Century ride.



Spc. Justin Roesch, a native of Grahott, Mich., assigned to the 66th Engineer Company "Sappers," 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, walks in an open field of soy plants with his mine detector searching for weapons caches near Camp Taji, northwest of Baghdad, Sept. 14.

Engineers partner with infantry to clear caches

Story and photos by Sgt. Whitney Houston

2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B

Locating weapons caches continues to be an instrumental element in the success of the Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Multi- National Division – Baghdad Soldiers conducted a weapons cache search on the east bank of the Tigris River Sept. 14, near Camp Taji, northwest of Baghdad.

The mission was conducted by a platoon with the 66th Engineer Company "Sappers," along with a squad of infantry Soldiers assigned to Company B "Boars Eye," 52nd Infantry Regiment, attached to 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment "Wolfhounds," both units from 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division. Joining

them were two canine teams from the 34th Military Police Detachment, which is based out of Fort Knox, Ky.

This mission was not typical for a platoon from an engineer company. Their major responsibility is extracting improvised-explosive devices and other ordnances from tactical routes.

"Normally, we'll assign a squad to do a cache search with infantry battalions," said 1st Lt. Darell Coffey, native of Winona, Miss., and platoon leader with the 66th Eng. Co. "They would serve as subject

matter experts and bring their mine detectors and have an assigned section to search. But this time, we took our whole platoon out there to do the cache search ourselves."

The engineer company has incorporated these search missions for a change in mission to avoid complacency and help the infantry battalions.

"Our primary role as engineers is route clearance," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Best, native of Williamsport, Penn., who is a platoon sergeant with the 66th En Co. "Every day we clear roads for eight to 10

hours. Our guys need a change of pace, and it also helps the infantry clear more of their battle space of any weapons."

The engineer Soldiers took the cache-clearance mission head on, overcame many obstacles and learned lessons to apply for future operations.

"You have limited access because of buildings and houses. A lot of vegetation gets in the way, which limits your advance; you have canals you need to cross and dusty weather limits your air assets," Coffey said. "But because this was the first mission of its type, we can assess all of these factors and know more fully how to deal with them for next time."

Army private put navy dad ‘through hell’

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. J.B.Jaso III

1st Bn. 27th Inf. Regt., 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B

Running away from home, stealing the family’s car and taking his father’s checkbook are all things of the past.

Today, Pfc. Joseph Biando serves as an infantryman here with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment “Wolfhounds,” 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

It was a long and bumpy road for Biando to reach where he is today; a successful Soldier serving in his 10th month of a 15-month deployment. He lives and works in the Istaqal Qada, just northeast of Baghdad.

“I was doing everything bad and nothing good,” said the 19-year-old, Chesapeake, Va., native, about his childhood. “I put my dad’s life through hell! I ran away several times; one time for 18 days.”

Biando’s father, a U.S. Naval officer with 24 years of service, had equally important issues to face when he wasn’t dealing with his son’s troublesome nature.

At one point, Lt. Cmdr. Keith Biando, Joseph’s father, deployed in the Persian Gulf on the patrol coastal boat USS Firebolt.

“I was deployed when a lot of stuff was happening with him,” said Keith, in regards to his son’s free-spirited behavior. “I tried to be a father through a (satellite) phone.”

If it wasn’t for an argument with his father that resulted in Joseph leaving home for



Pfc. Joseph Biando, a Chesapeake, Va., talks with children outside a recreation center in Baghdad’s Ad-hamiyah security district on Aug. 19. Biando is a mortarman assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment “Wolfhounds,” 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

good with no shoes or shirt, he probably wouldn’t be serving with distinction in Iraq today. The day after he left his home, he went to the Army recruiting station and enlisted as an infantryman.

“It was the quickest way out of the situation I was in,” said Joseph, about joining the Army in June 2007. “I always figured I would go into the military, but never thought the Army.”

Still not speaking to his family, Joseph stayed with a friend for two weeks before departing for basic combat training.

Even though Keith knew where his son was and what was going on, he decided to let Joseph tell him in his own time.

Finally, when Joseph was in need of clothes and other personal items, he talked to his father about his decision to join the Army.

The entire Biando family met with Joseph on his last night at home before heading to basic training. They didn’t talk about the past and the troubles that Joseph had caused; rather they enjoyed their last night together as a

Family.

That was the last night they were all together before Joseph would depart for Iraq. Once he completed basic combat training in November 2007, he was assigned to the Wolfhounds at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. He didn’t have much time to enjoy the island as he deployed to Iraq three weeks after his arrival.

“I called my dad, and he told me that it had to be done,” Joseph said. “He helped me get situated and told me to be

(Continued on page 15)

Soldiers work to power Sab al Bour

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Christina Bhatti
2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B

Residents are slowly returning to the city of Sab al Bour, northwest of Baghdad.

But they are coming back to homes with barely enough power to run their air conditioners, a necessity in the stifling summer heat of Iraq. Sab al Bour was once a thriving city of almost 200,000 residents, criminal violence made the city a ghost town by 2006 chasing out all but approximately 20,000.

“Getting electricity back to the town is a necessity, and it will give the people a reason to come back to their homes,” said Capt. Mark Gillman, a native of Las Vegas, Nev., and engineer assigned to the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

He visited the Sab al Bour station Sept. 27 to test the new 33 kV line.

“If we flip the switches and nothing happens, then that is a success,” he said.

The switches were flipped. Nothing happened when the first one was flipped, but the second switch flipped the breakers.

Employees of at the station assured Gillman the problems were caused by trees entangled in the power lines and it would be fixed.

Once complete the new electric line and substations will provide reliable power to the entire city for approximately eight to 10 hours a day.

This is an improvement from the four to six hours they currently receive, and almost three times the amount residents in Baghdad receive.

“The best part will be that the city’s key facilities will have power 24 hours a day,” Gilman said.

Electricity drives all other essential services.

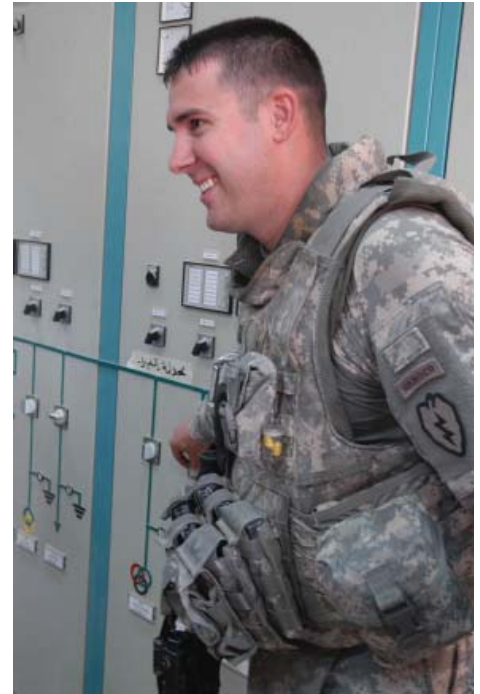
People can’t irrigate their fields without it as it powers the pumps which give them water, he said.

The 33 kV line will provide power to all of Sab al Bour.

Right now residents get their power through the Taji Market substation, nearly 15 km, or about nine miles away from an 11 kV line.

The 11 kV line is only meant to provide power up to five to eight kilometers, or about three to five miles, said Gilman. This causes severe power shortages for everyone in Sab al Bour.

“This is truly the driving force for all



Capt. Mark Gillman, a native of Las Vegas, and engineer assigned to 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad flips the 33 kV line switch at the power substation in Sab al Bour, northwest of Baghdad, Sept. 27 to test the new line’s functionality.

of our other projects in the area,” said Lt. Col. Thomas Mackey, a native of San Bernardino, Calif., and commander 2nd Squadron 14th Cavalry Regiment, “Strykehorse,” 2nd SBCT.

Getting the city’s electricity back on line is a saga which began in 2005.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers first recognized the problem and began work building a substation. It was finished a year later, but violence in the area prevented further work to connect the substation to any power lines.

USACE abandoned the project, but it was picked up again by 1st Cavalry Division in 2006, but once again violence caused a halt in the project.

“Now that this is a much safer area, we can effectively pick up this project and ensure completion,” said Gillman.

Gillman said the equipment which was damaged by violence is getting fixed and the project should be completed later this year.



Gillman (standing center), explains the workings of the power substation in Sab al Bour, northwest of Baghdad, Sept. 27.



(Above) Spc. Brian Smith, a native of Topeka, Kan., and food supply specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company 225th Brigade Support Battalion, "Mongoose," 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, carries boxes of food to load onto pallets for the Warrior battalions Sept. 20.



(Right) Pvt. Kendell Jackson, a native of Bronx, N.Y., and food supply specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Co. 225th BSB, loads pallets of cereal for the Soldiers at 14 Joint Security Stations and Combat Outposts in the Warrior area of operations, Sept. 20.

Soldiers work hard to keep comrades fed

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Christina Bhatti
2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B

Feeding approximately 2,200 Soldiers at 14 different sites which span an approximate 1,300 square mile area is a daunting task.

But every week the six Soldiers from the 225th Brigade Support Battalion, "Mongoose," 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad who work in the food supply warehouse fill the "shopping lists given to them by battalion cooks," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Dent, a native Chesapeake, Va., and food supply warehouse noncommissioned officer in charge, 225th BSB.

The Warrior warehouse is reminiscent of popular wholesale stores with pallets from floor to ceiling. Soldiers bustle about putting together supplies for the battalions of 2nd SBCT.

The Soldiers load pallets and boxes with everything from spices, sports drinks, snack foods and meat to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Once those lists are filled, the food supplies are sent to the 225th BSB Forward

Area Support Teams for distribution to every Joint Security Station and Combat Outpost in the Warrior area of operations.

These supplies go out to the Soldiers to keep their bellies full and their bodies healthy for the long missions in the severe climate of Iraq.

While Soldiers have a voice in what menus they receive, it ultimately comes down to what is in stock in Kuwait, said Capt. Alburto Pantoja, a native of Miami and commander Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 225th BSB.

Not only does stock play a factor in what goes out, the weather is also an important factor. All of the supplies are driven in from Kuwait, Dent said. If weather is bad, then perishable food goes bad and must be thrown away.

"It can be difficult," said Pantoja referring to the weather. "We get only so much in quantity of fresh fruits and

vegetables and if the weather is bad then they sit on trucks for too long. So when it gets here, we have to distribute what is good to all of the sites, and that limits the amount everyone gets."

But despite those issues, the warehouse Soldiers constantly ensure the Soldiers only get the best.

"We do everything we can to get the Soldiers what they need and want," Pantoja said. "This is a hard job and these Soldiers do great things."

Working in the warehouse is hard work, but for Sgt. Richard Hunt, a native of Mesa, Ariz., and food supply specialist, 225th BSB, the time was worth it.

"Working here for the last month was a great experience," he said. "I really got to learn what is out here for the Soldiers."

Hunt will soon leave the warehouse to rejoin a battalion as a cook, but is now armed with new knowledge so he can better provide for the Soldiers.

"I now have a new respect for what these Soldiers do," he said, "and it is definitely something I will keep in mind when I am back out with the Soldiers."

IP officers qualify to train peers

Story and photos by Cpl. Dustin Weidman
1st Bn. 21st Inf. Regt., 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B

Twenty Iraqi Police officers graduated the “Steel Trainer” program in Nasser Wa Salam, west of Baghdad, Sept. 25.

The Soldiers of Mortar Platoon “Steel,” 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, began “Steel Trainer” as a train-the-trainer program. Only the best officers from local stations are

selected to attend the six-week program.

“These were the best IPs from Abu Ghraib,” said Staff Sgt. Gary Strickland, a native of Rochester, Texas, and section sergeant for the Mortar Pltn. “Now that they have graduated Steel Trainer, they are even better.”

The goal of the program is to train the selected IP officers so, in turn, they are able to return to their station and train fellow officers what they learned in the program. The course included training on checkpoint operations, clearing houses, making arrests and searching for weapons and improvised-explosive device materials.

At the end of the six-week program, the students are given a final exam in which they are required to complete the tasks they have learned without the help of instructors. The exam proves their competency in the tasks and their ability to go back and train the other officers at their stations, said Strickland.

“These are some of the best Iraqi Police in Abu Ghraib,” said Brig. Gen. Kareem, at the graduation ceremony. “With what



Spc. Anh Nguyen, a native of San Diego, and gunner for the Mortar Platoon, 1st Bn., 21st Inf. Regt., 2nd SBCT, is “captured” by students from the Iraqi Police participating in the “Steel Trainer” train the trainer program at Nassir Wa Salam, west of Baghdad, Sept. 25.

they have learned over the past six weeks, it will help to improve security in Abu Ghraib.”



Twenty Iraqi Police stand in formation in front of Brig. Gen. Kareem, Abu Ghraib District Chief of Police, before receiving their certificates stating they have completed the “Steel Trainer” program at Nassir Wa Salam, west of Baghdad, Sept. 25.



U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Brad Willeford, 1st Bn., 27th Inf. Regt., 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., MND-B

Talking with the people

(Above) Staff Sgt. Rudy Mello, a San Antonio, native, looks at a news paper with a man Sept. 19 in the Rashidyah Nahia, northeast of Baghdad, Mello serves as a squad leader with Company B, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment “Wolfhounds,” 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

(Left) Mello takes time to talk with a child in the Rashidyah Nahia, Sept. 19.

Father proud of once troubled son

(Continued from page 11)

careful.”

“I gave him the same guidance I give my young Sailors,” Keith said. “Show up on time, and you’ll be good!”

Not knowing anyone yet, Joseph boarded the plane in Hawaii to do what he had trained for – combat.

“I was scared, nervous, worried, but also excited,” said Joseph, about his feelings while flying to Iraq.

Joseph is now 10 months into his deployment the feelings of fear, nervousness and worrisome have all but diminished, and he has embraced his job as a member of the personal security detachment for the Wolfhound commander.

It’s no easy task standing in 120-degree summer temperatures wearing the required protective gear, while others get to be inside air-

conditioned buildings.

However, Joseph realizes the importance of his duties.

“It’s an important task,” he said about his job. “We secure the battalion’s leadership in order to allow them to rebuild and reconstruct Iraq.”

Because of the security he provides, the Wolfhounds have been able to assist the Government of Iraq on the road to reconstruction. If it’s a difficult journey down that road – Joseph can relate.

Joseph was selected as the Wolfhound Soldier of the month in July and received the Army Achievement Medal for meritorious service in Iraq.

“He was so proud to be selected,” said his father. “I’m proud of him.”

“It felt good,” said Joseph, after receiving the award. “I felt special for about 20 minutes until I went on mission – then it was back to work.”

Joseph has another mission

– to make his dad proud.

“I just want to make my dad proud,” Joseph said. “I want to redeem myself, but it’s going to take awhile. I caused my dad a lot of stress.”

But Keith said he has no resentment over his son’s troubled youth.

“I never had any resentment or ill feelings for what he did,” the lieutenant commander said of his son’s childhood actions. “A dad can’t have any. I just tried to steer him on the right path and away from the bad.

“He’s always trying to make me proud, and I recognize that,” Keith said. “I recognize his maturity and I’m so proud of him.”

Now that he knows his father is proud of him, Joseph wants to continue to be the best he can and try to live up to his father.

“I apologize for my childhood, and I’m proud of my dad,” Joseph said. “I wish I



Biando jokes with a child about height restrictions needed to enter a recreation center in Baghdad’s Adhamiyah security district on Aug. 19.

could accomplish what he has accomplished in his 24 years in the Navy.”

Even though Joseph has several years until he could accomplish all that his dad has, he is defiantly on the road to success, looking at his childhood nightmares in the rearview mirror.

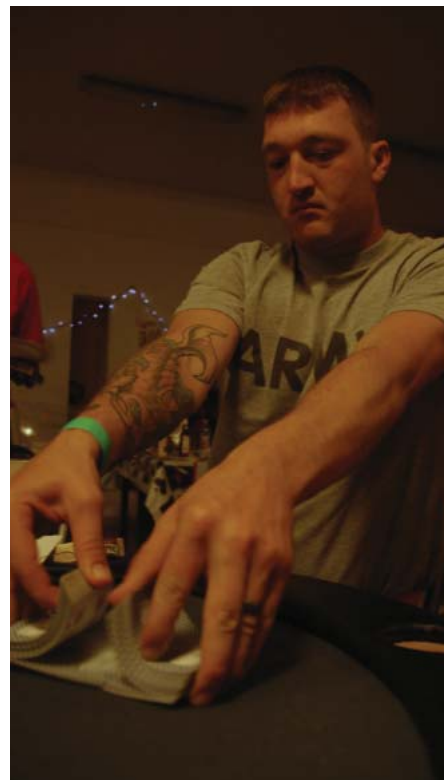


U.S. Army photos by Sgt. 1st Class Christina Bhatti, 2nd SBCT, PAO 25th Inf. Div., MND-B

Soldiers place best bets

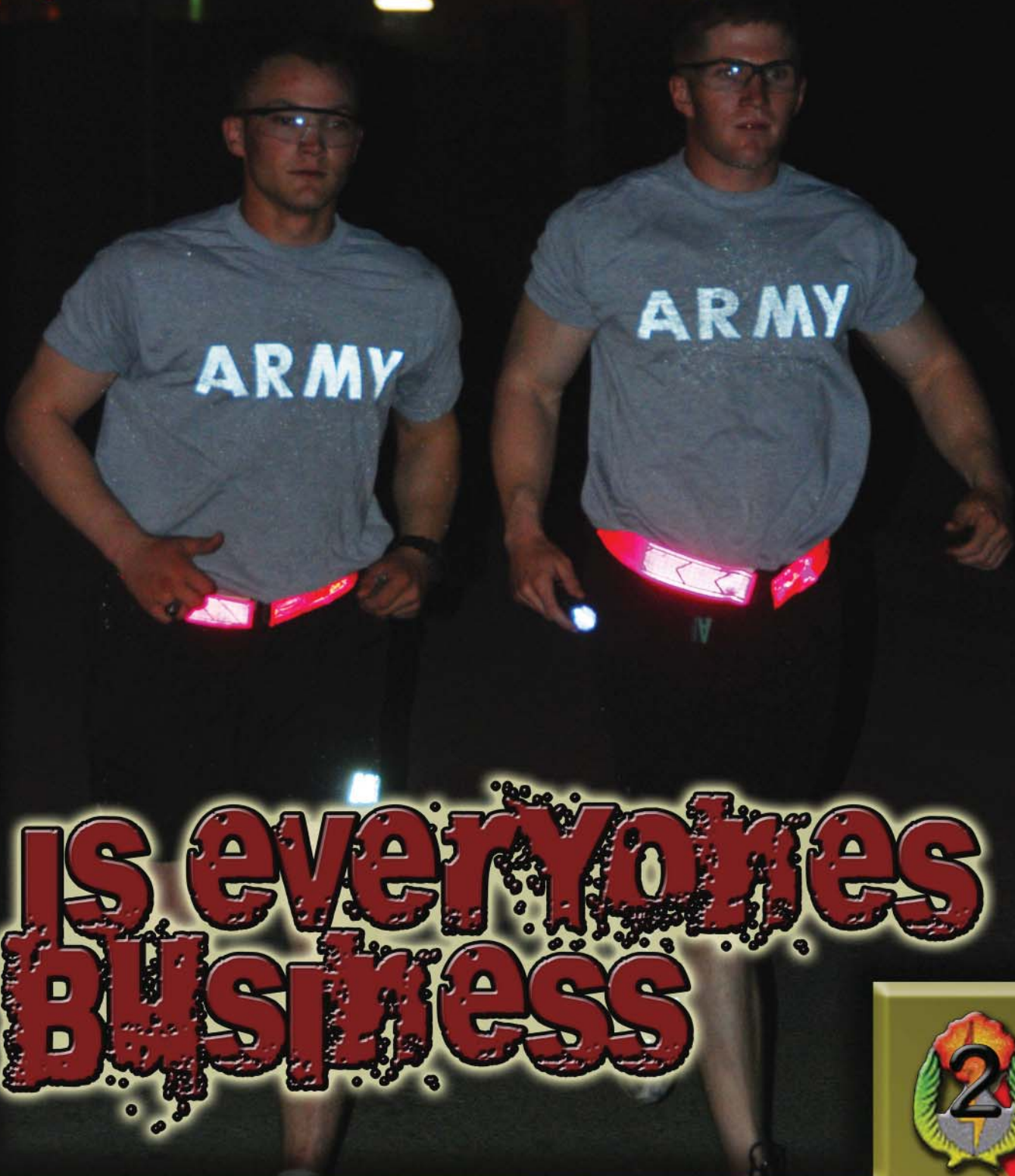
(Above) Soldiers assigned to Company A, 225th Brigade Support Battalion, “Mon-goose,” 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad place their bets during a game of Texas hold’em during Casino Night on Camp Taji, northwest of Baghdad, Sept. 28.

(Right) Spc. Jarod McFarland, a native of Fall River Mills, Calif., who serves with CoA, 225th BSB, takes his turn to shuffle the deck before dealing.





personal safety



is everyone's Business

