

COBRA STRIKE

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RAMADAN IN BAGHDAD



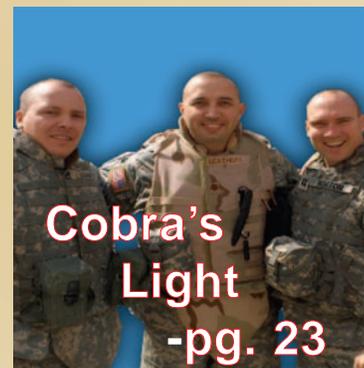
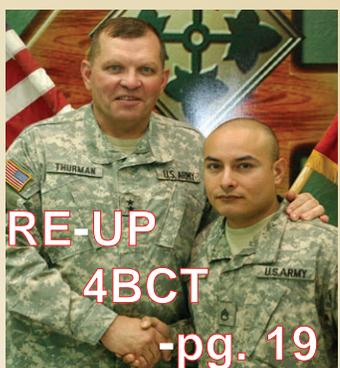
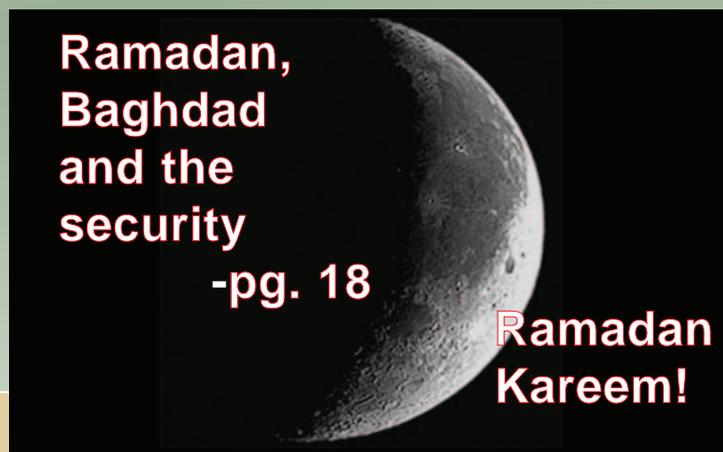
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Col. Michael F. Beech

COBRA⁶ on POINT

Cobra Leaders, Service members and Family,

I would like you to take a few moments of your time in recognizing the outstanding support of the Family Readiness Group, our family, friends and loved ones who continue to keep our spirits high as well as dedication to duty and mission. Thank you for seeing us through this demanding mission and its many challenges

throughout the deployment.

Since the beginning of Ramadan in late September and through October, our Soldiers have played a key role in supporting the Iraqi Army, Police and National Police in their efforts to maintain security throughout Baghdad.

The challenges have been great, and during this month of blessing, a time for Muslims to reflect upon their faith and understanding, the enemy has shown its lack of respect or regard for human life, attacking Soldiers, policemen and the people of Iraq, indiscriminately.

Despite the violence in

Baghdad, the attacks of the terrorists, criminals and thugs continue to remain consistently below averages seen earlier this year. This decline in effectiveness is one of the many indicators that our Iraqi security and coalition forces are playing an exemplary role, successfully quelling the sectarian violence and terrorism experienced earlier this year.

When you take a step back and look at the big picture, you can see the continuing progress being made throughout the communities.

Due to the level of professionalism of our Soldiers, the Cobra Brigade remains determined to defeat the terrorists and counter the violence in Baghdad and con-

tinue to maintain security throughout our area of responsibility.

We will continue to maintain our focus in the days ahead as we work to receive incoming units in furtherance of our mission here, and I take great pride in the work and efforts of our combat, support and service support elements as they take every opportunity to build upon their roles and capabilities throughout the upcoming days.

I am continuously in awe of their dedication and heroism, and know that your efforts, inspire me to lead from the front everyday.

-Cobras!

FROM THE FRONT

Soldiers of the Cobra Brigade ... Strong. Army Strong!

“Army Strong.” is the Army’s newest slogan and advertising campaign to date. It personifies every Army Soldier, because Soldiers represent the U.S. Army and the strength of the United States of America.

This campaign is the sixth generation of Army advertising campaigns for the all-volunteer army in more than 30 years. The first campaign was “Today’s Army Wants to Join You,” and in 1973, the Army introduced “Join the People Who’ve Joined the Army.” This campaign evolved into “This is the Army,” and then we introduced one of the most successful marketing campaigns in history, “Be All You Can Be” in January 1981. “An Army of One” debuted some 20 years later.

The words Army Strong are inspired by the strength of Soldiers—mental, emotional and physical strength, and our Soldiers, now more than ever, should take pride in themselves, their units and the U.S. Army.

Soldiers are the embodiment of Army Strong, and will carry the message with them at home and abroad.

Your actions everyday, while on duty, while at home, working in garrison or in a combat zone, are a direct reflection of our values and our commitment to excellence, and as Soldiers, our actions characterize the very nature of the Army’s strengths and its attributes.

I challenge leaders, noncommissioned officers, and Soldiers of this brigade to ensure everyone within your unit maintain situational awareness and remain focused on the mission.



Command Sgt. Maj. John E. Moody, Jr.

While we are making significant progress in areas throughout Baghdad, such as Doura, Karrada, Abu T’schir and Risala, the enemy has no intentions of surrendering any time soon. The improvised explosive device and sniper attacks on our Soldiers, the mortar and rocket attacks on our bases, is evidence enough

to all involved that the battle is still underway.

Our Soldiers are doing a great job with the recovery efforts after the fire at the ammunition holding area. The progress made says a lot about the kind of Soldiers in this brigade.

We remain determined in our efforts to defeat the terrorists and prevent the spread of violence in Baghdad. The upcoming days will be critical to ensure the successful completion of our mission.

New units arrive in Baghdad daily. We will ensure that they are integrated into our operations at every level and prepared to meet any challenge that may arise.

The gauntlet has been set before us and is well within our reach. We will not fail, as we continue to take the fight to the enemy. We will not quit, nor will we accept defeat.

Cobra 7--OUT!



Do in' the dirty work

Eskimo Company keeps roads clear and Soldiers safe

A Soldier with Company E, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, uses the robotic arm of the Buffalo to interrogate suspicious items for explosives in Baghdad Oct. 18.

*Story and Photos by Spc. James Hunter
49th PAD (Abn.), MNC-I PAO*

Guardedly passing through the trash strewn streets of southern Baghdad, it is hard to distinguish what could be mixed within the seemingly innocuous garbage, but a few things do stand out: in the minds of the patrolling Soldiers: filled burlap bags with wires protruding from the surface; large, black trash bags mean trouble.

Improvised Explosive Devices, roadside bombs, placed by a cowering enemy, sit waiting to be detonated against the next passing victim, hidden from the eyes of the Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces trying to protect the local citizens.

“At times, when it gets mentally challenging, when activity is high and you find a lot of IEDs, sometimes you just ask yourself ‘when is it going to stop,’” said Sgt. 1st Class Gerald Lewis, platoon sergeant, 2nd platoon, Company E, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

The engineers of Co. E have worked

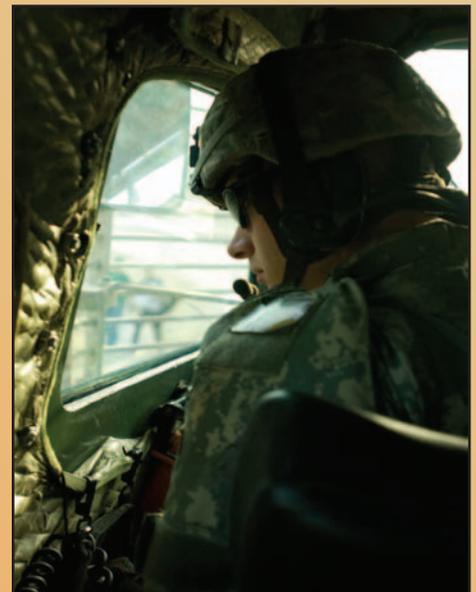
tirelessly since December of 2005 running route clearance missions throughout Baghdad. Using Bradley Tracked Armored Fighting Vehicles, RG-31 Mine Protected Vehicles and a Mine Protective Clearance Vehicle, or “Buffalo,” they are able to create freedom of movement for all coalition troops, said 1st Lt. Jesse Bisnette, platoon leader, 2nd platoon, Co. E, 1st Bn., 12th Eng. Bde.

With 40 weeks of patrolling under their belt, the company has conducted more than 444 route clearance missions, covering a total of 17,650 kilometers throughout Baghdad. To date, the company has interrogated more than 3,100 suspicious items, locating more than 70 total IEDs.

Bisnette said the mission has been a success thus far, but stressed victory can not be claimed on the amount of explosives found.

“The success of the route clearance mission is not totally contingent on how many IEDs we find. If we go out and we don’t find anything on the route, its still an accomplishment,” he

said. “We provide a means for coalition forces to travel along those routes. It’s better when we find IEDs, but it doesn’t mean it’s not a success. We provide



A Soldier with Company E, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, keeps his eyes on the road, looking explosives while on a route clearance mission in Baghdad Oct. 18.



A Soldier with Company E, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, performs preventive maintenance on his vehicle after route clearance mission Oct. 18. The engineers of Co. E have worked tirelessly since December of 2005 running route clearance missions throughout Baghdad to enable freedom of movement for all coalition troops.

freedom of movement.”

Their eyes are constantly on the road, looking for suspicious objects. If they deem it a possible threat to the Iraqi citizens, Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces, they interrogate the object, which means literally probing it with the arm of the Buffalo.

If an IED is detected, an Explosive Ordnance Detachment is called to the site, and the engineers continue to sweep the location for secondary IEDs.

Occasionally, the combat engineers will receive a call that a combat patrol has encountered an IED. Before EOD arrives, they will sweep through the area to remove any potential secondary explosives, knowing their vehicles can handle more of an explosive impact.

“We’d rather find them before they find somebody else. Even when they do detonate on us, although it can be mentally challenging, we can

take a better hit than someone else,” Lewis said.

The missions have been quite challenging for the engineers, stated Staff Sgt. Lorin Strange, Bradley squad leader, Co. E, 1st Bn., 12th Eng. Bde.

“One of our very first times out, we found two IEDs. We took our position; brand new to all this,” Strange said.



“There was all this traffic, and we started taking sniper shots and rocket propelled grenades. One stopped right behind the rear Bradley and didn’t explode.”

“While all this is going on, there are these two IEDs sitting in front of us, primary and secondary. It was crazy.” Though Strange finds it mentally challenging at times staring at the road for six hours straight, he and his fellow Soldiers have a mission to support; and they know the entire brigade depends on their skill and determination.

“I’ve seen the worst of what can happen out there, and my inspiration is to make sure that doesn’t happen again,” he explained.

To ensure quality of life and motivation is high for the Soldiers during their deployment, once a week, Lewis and Bisnette try to give each squad one day off to rest from their challenging tasks.

Lewis also often switches the crews around to give them a chance to work with other individuals within the platoon.

This allows the platoon to become very versatile, giving them the chance to work with and become proficient with each item of equipment they use in the road.

When this deployment is complete in Iraq, the Soldiers agree they will leave with a sense of relief, but ultimately a sense of accomplishment.

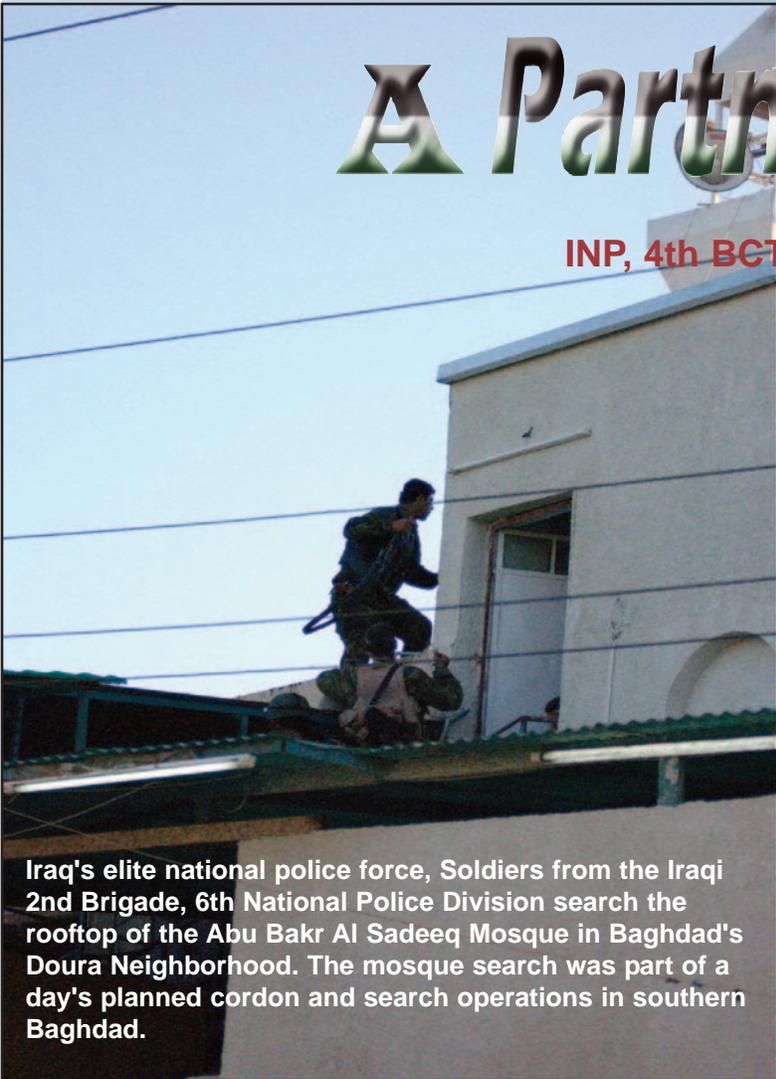
Lewis and Strange both feel it will be a relief returning home to their families and out of harm’s way, but with the realization that they made a difference in saving people’s lives.

A Soldier with Company E, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, mounts his weapon to the RG-31 Mine Protection Vehicle prior to a route clearance mission in Baghdad Oct. 18. With 40 weeks of patrolling under their belt, the company has conducted more than 444 route clearance missions, covering a total of 17,650 kilometers throughout Baghdad.

A Partnership

INP, 4th BCT continue Together Forward

for Security



Iraq's elite national police force, Soldiers from the Iraqi 2nd Brigade, 6th National Police Division search the rooftop of the Abu Bakr Al Sadeeq Mosque in Baghdad's Doura Neighborhood. The mosque search was part of a day's planned cordon and search operations in southern Baghdad.

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

A loud knock on the door breaks the silence of the mosque and grabs the attention of its inhabitants. A representative of the local imam, his family members and associates standing behind him, greet the Iraqi National Policemen standing at their door.

After a brief introduction, the police officers from 6th Battalion, 2nd National Police Division file into the Islamic building used for prayer and worship.

The days mission has all but ended, as the leaders of the 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment provide overwatch from across the street.

At the request of the INP, and in respect for Iraqi culture, the Soldiers attached to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division will not be entering the mosque on this mission.

"The (INP) forces are doing most of the searching part of this cordon element, with my Soldiers providing oversight, assistance and expertise as necessary," said Lt. Col. Gregory Butts, commander, 2nd Bn., 506th Inf. Regt., 101st Airborne Division, attached to 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"Only Iraqi Security Forces will go in and search the mosque," Butts said, observing the ISF scouring the roof of the mosque. "The NP want to go in and search it, because they also feel it is more appropriate, especially during

Ramadan. We are here in case there are any problems."

Iraqi Security and Multi-National Division - Baghdad Forces continue to conduct security operations, like this one, throughout Baghdad to provide a secure and stable environment for Iraq.

Baghdad's Doura neighborhood has been plagued by terrorist elements and the Soldiers operations completed in the area have become routine for ISF and MND-B Soldiers.

The Soldiers link-up with their Iraqi counterparts in the early morning hours. The IPs roll their vehicles into the march and prepare for the upcoming mission.

"Doura has been our main effort for the brigade and division," said Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Moss, 2nd Bn., 506th Inf. Reg. "Our whole goal is to give the Iraqi people the courage and confidence to actually defend themselves and enjoy life as a free people."

The units move simultaneously and block off key entrances, isolating a small portion of the neighborhood, in this case, near the Doura Power Plant in southern Baghdad.

The Soldiers and NP officers dismount and form their teams for conducting the intensive search operations that have affectionately earned the nickname, "a block party."

The efforts of the ISF and MND-B Soldiers are helping the Iraqi government to stand up to the challenge of securing the nation's capital, said Moss.

"One thing for the Iraqi people, them gaining trust in their Iraqi Police and National Police, will individually help us out, because they know we are there for a purpose," said Moss. "Eventually, the people are going to help us close out this war, because we need them just as much as they need us."

The area of responsibility assigned to the battalion is at times challenging for the "Renegade" Soldiers, who have been responsible for the Doura area for nearly a year.

"Everyday they go out," Moss beamed. "They know they are going out for a purpose: to help the Iraqi people. Now our main effort is Doura, cleaning that bad boy out of insurgents, improvised-explosive devices and trash; anything that will help the Iraqi people stand-up and enjoy life like citizens."

For Company A's 2nd Platoon Leader, 2nd Lt. Terry Gambrel, the military is doing all the right things; taking the



Iraqi National Police summon Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment over to a small weapons cache hidden in a trash dump behind a neighborhood in Doura, Baghdad. The National Police from the 6th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division routinely accompany the "Renegade" Soldiers during joint patrols and security operations, such as the cordon and search in Doura in October--part of the ongoing efforts in support of Operation Together Forward.

fight to the enemy, creating a more confident and capable ISF and securing the Doura neighborhood for the Iraqi people.

"From the time we got here, we haven't slowed down our (operation tempo), and if anything, towards the end, we have picked it up even more," Gambrel said. "We have had a lot of big operations - Together Forward being the biggest. After we are done taking it to the enemy and aggressively securing an area, we can't just go back to the forward operating base and say we are finished."

While the brigade and battalion leadership works with local leaders in the area to control Doura, the Soldiers of "Easy Company" are witnessing a more self-reliant ISF, said Gambrel.

"These guys are good, and they have the ability to affect change," said the former special forces Soldier about the Iraqis from the 6th Bn., 2nd NPD. "These guys are a more capable unit than what we have seen in the past."

In less than four hours, the Soldiers sweep the neighborhood, thoroughly searching more than 140 homes and buildings - a task that would have taken longer, and with buildings such as the mosque, been virtually impossible without the presence of the INP.

The presence of the Iraqi security forces is measured and respected by both the Iraqi citizens in Doura and the MND-B Soldiers partnered in the cause.

People open their doors and find comfort in the Iraqi soldiers working with the MND-B Soldiers, said Pfc. Jeremy Bailey, infantryman, Co. A, 2nd Bn., 506th Inf. Regt.

"It's been a lot safer. A lot of people are really happy," said Bailey, a native of Calhoun, Ga. "They feel a lot safer."

Operation Together Forward was the toughest task for Bailey to date, who upon completing his basic training at Fort Benning, Ga., arrived to the unit eight weeks into the deployment.

"It was kind of rough, because we were out there for 15 hours-a-day, and all we had time to do was come back for a couple hours of sleep, and then it was up and back out there again," Bailey remembered. "This is a tough job."

Despite the long days, the hard work and the imminent danger, Bailey, who once took shrapnel in his face, wants to see his work and efforts affect more than a temporary change.

"Sometimes, I have my doubts, but I think it could be possible," he explained. "I notice little changes. Now, I notice that they have a trash cleaning crew out in sector, and people throw their garbage in a dump truck.

"It's the little things like that we are seeing that are starting to help us out. I believe it is getting better."

Bailey and Gambrel, as well as their leaders, attribute their recent successes to the dedication and the hard work of the ISF working to rebuild Baghdad.

Talk to the people in Doura; watch the NP, said Gambrel. They are accomplishing the security mission in Doura. The people will say that Doura is secure.

"We are doing exactly what I think we are supposed to be doing," Gambrel said. "We want a more confident ISF, and that is what we are doing."

"Every target we hit, we take the ISF with us; the cordon and knock missions, everything we do - those guys are with us. If we run into some kind of problem, they come running. They are also out there patrolling themselves. That's a huge leap from when we first arrived."



Soldiers from Company A, 2nd Bn., 506th Inf. Reg. accompanied Iraqi National Police from the 6th Bde, 2nd NP Div. during security operations in Doura.



“When the lock on the container was cut, the Soldiers knew they had found something big,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Shover, command sergeant major, 1st Sqdn., 14th Cav.

*Story and photos by Spc. Curtis Squires
49th Public Affairs Det. (ABN), MNC-I PAO*

With only a crescent moon, the stars and night-vision goggles to light the path, Iraqi Security Forces and elements of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division moved on several objectives during the early morning hours Wednesday.

The stakes in this operation were high because the mission was to search a mosque and its surrounding muhalla in Doura neighborhood's southern region of Abu T'schir in the Rasheed district.

Iraqi Special Operations Forces had been given the mission to move on the first objective, the Kathamayan Mosque, while elements of 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment secured the outer cordon and provided several roof-top observation teams for the mission.

Known as the "Warhorse" Battalion, 1st Sqdn., 14th Cav., part of the 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, is attached to the 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

As a place designated for worship, a mosque is a sensitive area to operate, and the decision to search the place of Muslim worship was a weighted one, said Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Shover, command sergeant major, 1st Sqdn., 14th Cav.

The squadron received several tips from local citizens that illegal armed militia have been using the mosque to conduct insurgent operations in the area.

A suspected armed militia group leader on the squadron's high-value individual list was also believed to be inside the

mosque.

had to be searched.

ISOF was chosen to conduct the search inside the mosque while U.S. forces provided external security for the operation, he said.



A Soldier from the 1st Battalion, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, prepares and x-spray test for a possible detainee during a cordon and search operation.



A Soldier from the 1st Battalion, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, currently attached to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, breaks off a lock on a gate during a cordon and search operation in the Abu T'schir neighborhood in southern Baghdad.

The decision was made, continued Shover; the mosque had to be searched.

ISOF was chosen to conduct the search inside the mosque while U.S. forces provided external security for the operation, he said.

Following the search, three men were detained for questioning. They were released later that day.

As the sun started to break, the ISOF element was pulling out of the mosque, but on the other side of the muhalla, Company C, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, had already started searching house to house.

"Our part of the mission was to secure the area around the mosque," said Sgt. Mauro Rutigliano, squad leader, Company C, 5th Bn., 20th Inf. Reg., 2nd ID. "Every house was searched, which took about four hours. We worked to standard, not to time."

Teamed with the 6th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division, the company moved house to house searching for illegal weapons, or evidence the residents may have been involved in terrorist activity against the government of Iraq or Coalition Forces, said Shover.

During the search of the muhalla, five residents were detained for questioning. All were later released.

As the search was winding down, a local citizen stepped forward with information about a weapons cache belonging to the mosque, said Rutigliano. The cache was in a red shipping container positioned next to the Kathamayan Mosque.

When the lock on the container was cut, the Soldiers knew they had found something big, said Shover.

Although further investigation of the cache would have to wait until an explosive ordnance disposal team could deter-

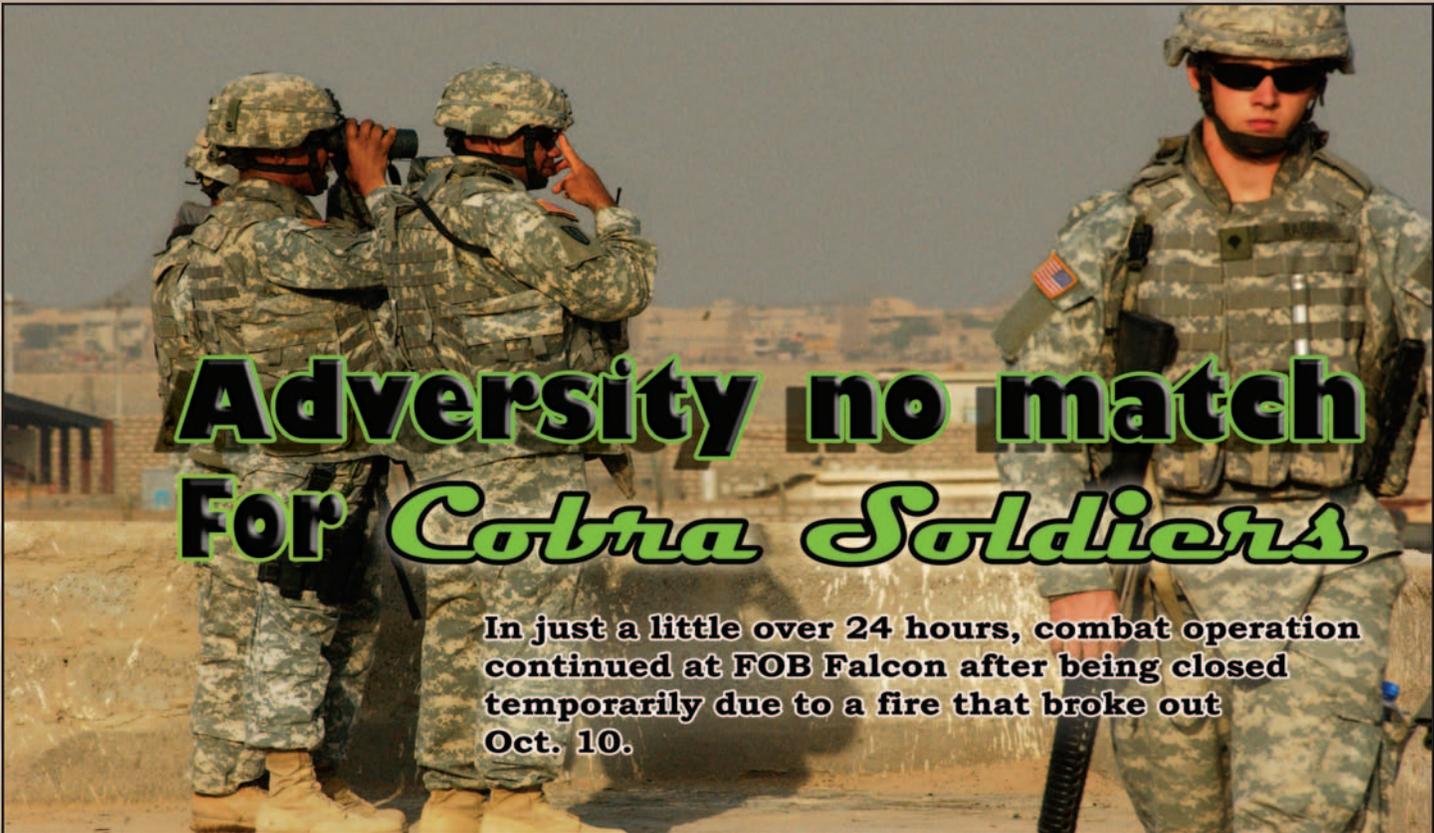
mine the container was not booby trapped, it was later discovered that 15 120mm artillery rounds, 15 81mm artillery rounds, two rocket-propelled grenade launchers, four RPG rounds, 12 RPG boosters, nine 60mm artillery rounds, five Iraqi uniforms, an 81mm artillery tube, 1,900 7.62mm rounds, a mortar tripod, an automatic machine gun, three 81mm rounds, four AK-47 magazines, two fuses, and two hand grenades were inside the shipping container.

The cache was a great find, said Shover. It takes away the terrorists' resources, limiting the enemy's ability to launch attacks on Iraqi and Coalition Forces.

"Insurgents are running out of places to hide," Shover said. "We will find him; maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but we will catch you!"



Soldiers display various ammunition and bomb making materials after discovering a large weapons cache while conducting an cordon and search operation in southern Baghdad.



Adversity no match For Cobra Soldiers

In just a little over 24 hours, combat operation continued at FOB Falcon after being closed temporarily due to a fire that broke out Oct. 10.

The remains of what is left of the ammunition holding area located at Forward Operating Base Falcon can be seen from the rooftop of a barracks Oct. 12 after four enemy 82mm mortar rounds hit the containers holding the highly explosive munitions Oct. 10.

Story and photos by Spc. Jason Dangel

Combat operations resumed for the Soldiers of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, as the sound of armored combat vehicles cut through the silence of what was just hours before a still Forward Operating Base Falcon on the morning of Oct 12.

In just over 24 hours, combat operations continued from the U.S. military base in southern Baghdad, which was temporarily closed after enemy 82mm mortar rounds hit an ammunition holding area on Oct. 10, causing a torrent of explosions and fires that continued to smolder through the next day.

Despite triggering multiple explosions and causing fire crews to work overtime, there were no casualties, and little damage was sustained to the buildings and vehicles positioned throughout the large military base located in the Doura neighborhood, said Col. Michael Beech, commander, 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

With the help of seven teams of explosive ordnance disposal specialists, the Soldiers at FOB Falcon were quickly able to locate and dispose of all unexploded ordnance near the explosion site which enabled business to return to normal Thursday morning, he said.

"Ultimately this incident has had a minimal effect on my brigade's operations within the last 24 hours," Beech said.

"This attack did not effect ongoing Baghdad security operations in our area of responsibility, and the loss of the ammunition will not degrade the operational capability of the 4th Brigade Combat Team," Beech continued.

The most damage occurred in areas directly surrounding the large steel shipping containers that held the various types



White ribbon marks a piece of unexploded ordnance near the previous location of the Forward Operating Base Falcon Ammunition Holding Area. n just over 24 hours, combat operations continued from the U.S. military base in southern Baghdad, which was temporarily closed after enemy 82mm mortar rounds hit an ammunition holding area on Oct 10.



Cobra Soldiers scour the FOB Falcon grounds, searching vehicles, buildings and lots for unexploded ordnance.

of tank, artillery and small-arms ammunition, he said.

"Currently we have cleared all the areas that are necessary for the maneuver units to use to be able to conduct normal operations," said Maj. Mark Crussow, operations officer, 3rd EOD Battalion, attached to the 4th Inf. Div.

"Our focus now is to secure the ammunition holding area and dispose of anything we feel poses a threat to personnel on the FOB," he said.

The seven ordnance teams from the 3rd EOD Bn, are working from dawn to dusk and have already disposed of several hundred pounds of explosives deemed unstable.

All other areas except those within about 1,000 feet of the explosion site have been completely secured, he said.

At the time of the attack at approximately 10:40 p.m. Tuesday, base personnel went to full alert, as attack aviation and unmanned aerial vehicles flew overhead in an attempt to locate the terrorists' mortar position, a statement released by Multi-National Division-Baghdad stated.

One of the mortar shells, more than likely, struck a portion of the holding area designated for storing flares, or munitions used for illumination, igniting a fire which then caused the ammunition to explode, said Staff Sgt. Evan Ort, ammunitions specialist Company A, 704th Support Battalion, 4th BCT.

Ort, the non-commissioned officer-in-charge of the ammunition holding area, said at least 15 containers went unscathed during the incident.

Further assessments will be made once the quarantined area around the site is secured, said Ort, while

searching for ordnance Thursday with other Soldiers from the 704th Spt. Bn.

Sgt. Peter Schmitt, petroleum specialist, Company B, 704th Spt. Bn., recounted the incident and said all the necessary steps were taken to ensure the safety of the Soldiers living on the FOB.

"It was definitely crazy to watch. Anyone living near the site was evacuated to a safe location until everything

was secure," Schmitt said, speaking about the explosion that sent flames and a rainfall of sparks into the night sky.

Soldiers and base employees were moved immediately to the safety of hardened buildings and structures on the base, Schmitt explained.

Schmitt said that he was able to see the explosions from his barracks located relatively close to the site, but quickly helped evacuate Soldiers to a safe building several thousand feet away.

"As bad as everything sounded when this incident first happened, it turns out not to be as bad as I thought," said Command Sgt. Maj. John Moody, 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div., during a visit to FOB Falcon Thursday.

"Our Soldiers are doing a great job with recovery, and I think the fact that something like that can happen to this brigade, and we can rebound so quickly, says a lot about the kind of Soldiers we have," he continued. "This event has had a minimal impact on our mission and what we do."



Staff Sgt. Evan Ort, ammunitions specialist Company A, 704th Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division marks down the location of a piece of unexploded ordnance located at Forward Operating Base Falcon Oct. 12. In just over 24 hours combat operations continued from the U.S. Military base after four enemy 82mm mortar rounds hit an ammunition holding area on Tuesday night causing a torrent of explosions and fires that continued to smolder early the next day.

Spot Report

BAGHDAD

(RIGHT) Col. Todd Dombroski, surgeon, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, and an Iraqi doctor from the 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, record medical information from a patient during a joint medical operation in the Al Forat neighborhood in central Baghdad.

(BELOW) Sgt. William Clark, combat medic, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 1st Armored Division, attached to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, treats a wounded Iraqi citizen during security operations in western Baghdad.



U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Jason Dangel



U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Jason Dangel

Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Boyer, psychological operations non-commissioned officer-in-charge, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, takes time after work to try his luck at a little fishing at one of the ponds in front of the palace located at Forward Operating Base Prosperity in central Baghdad.



U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

(RIGHT) Sgt. Michael Hunton, squad leader, Company B, 40th Engineer Battalion and Spc. Bryan Reiter, combat engineer, employ a MARK Robot, a device used to uncover suspected Improvised Explosive Devices, during a mission with the 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 1st Armored Division in western Baghdad Oct. 4.



U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams



U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Joseph Crow and his dog Rico search for bomb making materials during a mission with the 2nd Battalion, 506th Regimental Combat Team, in the Doura neighborhood in southern Baghdad.



U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

(ABOVE) Two Iraqi medics from the 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division perform a litter carry during an Iraqi medic competition hosted by the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division at Forward Operating Base Prosperity.

LEST WE FORGET

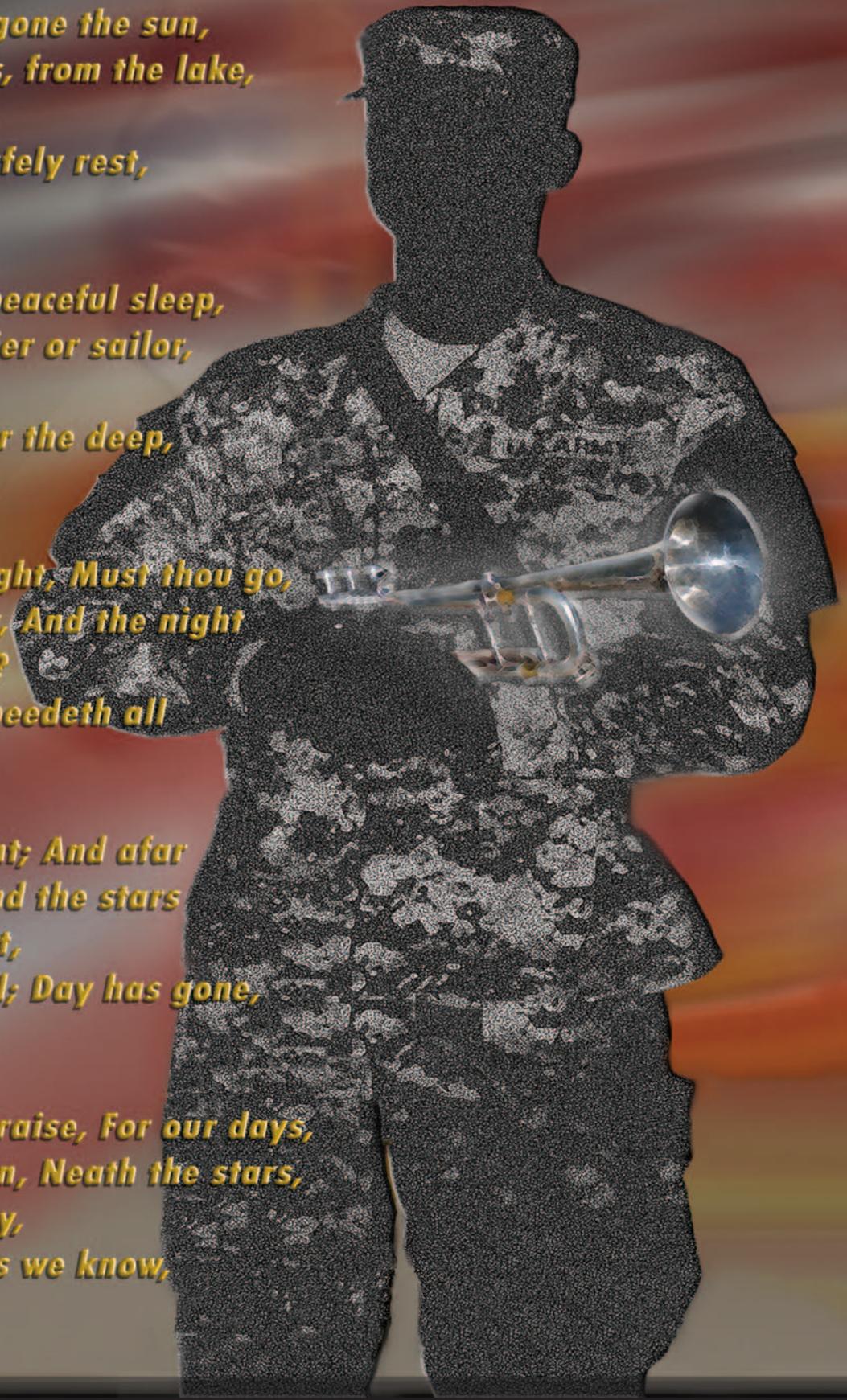
*Day is done, gone the sun,
From the hills, from the lake,
From the sky.
All is well, safely rest,
God is nigh.*

*Go to sleep, peaceful sleep,
May the soldier or sailor,
God keep.
On the land or the deep,
Safe in sleep.*

*Love, good night, Must thou go,
When the day, And the night
Need thee so?
All is well. Speedeth all
To their rest.*

*Fades the light; And afar
Goeth day, And the stars
Shineeth bright,
Fare thee well; Day has gone,
Night is on.*

*Thanks and praise, For our days,
'Neath the sun, Neath the stars,
'Neath the sky,
As we go, This we know,
God is nigh.*



Warrior Soldiers bid farewell to fallen leader

Story and photos by Spc. Jason Dangel

As silence fell upon the room, Soldiers from the Warrior Battalion lowered their heads and without words, said goodbye to a fallen brother, leader and friend at the Steel Falcon Chapel in southern Baghdad Wednesday.

1st Lt. James N. Lyons, a native of Albany, N.Y., assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division was remembered for being a man of character, a great friend and a loyal tank platoon leader, as Soldiers and officers spoke about the life of the fallen hero during an hour long memorial ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon.

"Tonight we are gathered in remembrance of 1st Lt. James Lyons, who was killed in action on the 27th of September," said Lt. Col. Gregory Butts, commander, 2nd Battalion, 506th Regimental Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division.

Lyons, 28, attached to the 2nd Bn., 506th RCT, was killed from injuries sustained from enemy small-arms fire during combat operations in southern Baghdad.

"Whether he was one of your Soldiers, one of your leaders or simply your friend, he will always be part of us," Butts said to the Soldiers amassed inside the chapel.

Holding back tears, former commander, Capt. Rodney Morgan recalled his time with his young platoon leader and said there was never a time a smile wasn't on Lyons' face.

"1st Lt. James Lyons; my ever-smiling junior officer," Morgan said looking up at a display of pictures of the young lieutenant on the wall of the chapel.

"I first met him in late April of 2005 prior to taking over the company. He was still very green back then. He had just finished his first tank gunnery as a platoon leader and still had so much learning to do," Morgan continued.

Morgan recalled that Lyons had just had eye surgery, and he had trouble driving for the first few days afterward, especially to physical training in the morning, the commander said laughing.

"I waited it out, and finally his eyes were good enough to get him to PT on time, of course I found out shortly after I didn't have to worry about James' physical fitness," Morgan said smiling.

"He cared deeply about his family, his fiancé and his Soldiers. He did everything in his power to not only get back to those that he loved but to ensure that the Soldiers in his charge would get back to see their families as well," he said.

Close friend and fellow platoon leader, 1st Lt. Randal Jackson remembered Lyons as a warrior and a proud Soldier who served his country with honor.

Jackson said his friend's dedication and commitment was evident in everything he did.

"We deployed together, we fought together and it still shocks me to admit that we will not return together," Jackson said.

"James was with us since our birth as a company back in January 2005, and through our long train-up before, and these ten months deployed, has etched his memory into each of our minds," Jackson continued.

Jackson described many instances where his friend had close calls while operating in the Iraqi Capitol, and said that Lyons was undaunted and continued his mission,

just as a leader should.

"I thank God for each close call James had, and lived through; because it gave me one more day to be with him," Jackson said.

"Only in death does duty end, my friend, and yours has ended too soon," Jackson said, looking at the memorial display and picture of his fallen friend.

"James will always be in our hearts," he concluded.



Capt. Rodney Morgan, commander, Company C, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, says goodbye to one of his young junior leaders.



1st Sgt. Antonin Hull, Co. C, 1st Bn., 12th Inf., 4th BCT, yells out the final roll call, paying his last respects to a fallen hero.



Staff Sgt. Bradley Hoy, command personal security detachment team leader, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, leads a three vehicle convoy carrying brigade command sergeant major Command Sgt. Maj. John Moody through the Doura neighborhood in southern Baghdad.

Story and photos by Spc. Jason Dangel

In the dark hours of morning, a sergeant awakens to the sound of his internal communications radio. The stern voice over the radio instructs the leader to rally his men and be ready to move into southern Baghdad in less than 30 minutes.

Fifteen minutes later, approximately 14 combat-ready Soldiers line-up their armored vehicles with crew-served

weapons ready and mounted atop steel turrets. The Soldiers stand ready to greet the brigade commander before leaving the safe haven of a small forward operating base in the International Zone.

This is the life of the Soldiers who make up the command Personal Security Detachment teams of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

The two 14-man teams are tasked to provide a means of safe and timely transportation for the brigade commanders, Col. Michael Beech and Command Sgt. Maj. John Moody. A task that requires a state of readiness 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week.

There isn't a day when the two teams made up of infantrymen, cavalry scouts, tankers and military police don't see the pothole ridden highways of the bustling Iraqi city, either out on patrol with units of the 4th BCT, or taking the command group to various meetings and ceremonies throughout

central and southern Baghdad.

"The PSD team is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring the safety of the colonel and the sergeant major for any and all missions and meetings within the Multi-National Division-Baghdad and 4th Brigade area of operations," said Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Cardona, PSD noncommissioned officer-in-charge, 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Approximately four months before deploying in early December 2005, the Soldiers who make up the current command PSD teams were each selected for the security job that they would be tasked to complete, Cardona said.

According to Cardona, most of the Soldiers were very young and inexperienced when they showed up for their first day of duty as the new PSD teams back at Fort Hood, Texas in late 2005.

Unsure of how well the assortment of young "Cobra" Soldiers would work together, Cardona sent both teams through two weeks of initial training from the start.



Sgt. Fernando Rodriquez, PSD, 4th BCT, pulls security during a mission with the brigade command sergeant major in the Doura neighborhood in southern Baghdad.

"From the day the PSD was created it was kind of thrown together," the 15-year U.S. Army veteran from Alice, Texas explained. "All the Soldiers came from different units and backgrounds, so the training gave me early assessments on what they needed to improve on as a cohesive security unit."

The majority of the standardized training included a two-week course that encompassed convoy escort procedures, protection tactics for principle dignitaries and security procedures when moving the command staff through the combat zone, he said.

After the training, Cardona identified two leaders who are now both designated team leaders for the two PSD teams. Staff Sgt. Bradley Hoy, an infantryman from Llano, Texas, and Sgt. Jeffrey Rogers, a military policeman from Buffalo, N.Y.

Both veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Hoy and Rogers took comfortably to the leadership positions they were asked to fill, and worked hard to ensure their Soldiers were trained and ready for their mission in the Iraqi capital, explained Cardona.

"Truthfully I don't think we could have done it without (the leaders)," Cardona said, speaking about the suc-

cess of the PSD teams. "They both stepped up into an unfamiliar position and have done a great job leading their Soldiers."

After four months of training, to include a three-week mission rehearsal exercise at Fort Hood, the two teams deployed with the rest of the brigade to Camp Buerhing, Kuwait in late November 2005, and to date have completed approximately 550 successful missions.

Aside from the constant string of daily missions tasked to the two teams of autonomous Soldiers, when not traveling the streets of Baghdad, they can be found in the motor pool working on their M1114 High Mobility Multi-Wheeled Vehicles.

Down time is hard to come by for the PSD Soldiers who are constantly working to improve and upgrade the vehicles that carry the 4th BCT's command personnel.

If a new armor upgrade is available, there is no question that it will be installed, said Spc. Alex Faiivae, a gunner for the commander's team.

"There is definitely a lot of time spent in the motor pool," Faiivae said, a native of Woodridge, Va. "We have installed just about everything in terms of armor upgrades that is available. We

have to have the highest amount of protection because we carry around the colonel and sergeant major, and they have to be safe."

Most of the Soldiers are in the motor pool so often they even have their own coveralls, Faiivae said.

There is no doubt that the PSD Soldiers have a busy schedule where sleep sometimes is a low priority, but that doesn't discourage the personal security troopers.

Morale always remains high among the two team, said Sgt. Gregory Thomson, a team leader on Moody's PSD.

"The way our young Soldiers have grown in to what they are today is amazing," said Thomson, a native of Oglesby, Ill. "When they are asked to do something they get it done, and they are always focused on their mission.

"They have all grown into some great Soldiers," he said.

Col. Michael Beech, commander, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, makes assessments while Sgt. Jeffrey Rogers, command personal security detachment team leader, pulls security during a mission with a platoon from the 2nd Battalion, 506th Regimental Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division.



Ramadan

Story By D. Saleeh

What is Ramadan? What is the significance of fasting all day? And was violence reduced in Iraq because of this holy time?

During the blessed month of Ramadan, Muslims all over the world abstain from food, drink, and other physical needs during the daylight hours. As a time to purify the soul, re-focus attention on God, and practice self-sacrifice, Ramadan is much more than just not eating and drinking.

Muslims are called upon to use this month to re-evaluate their lives in light of Islamic guidance. We are to make peace with those who have wronged us, strengthen ties with family and friends, do away with bad habits -- essentially to clean up our lives, our thoughts, and our feelings.

Therefore, fasting is not merely physical, but is rather the total commitment of the person's body and soul to the spirit of the fast. Ramadan is a time to practice self-restraint; a time to cleanse the body and soul from impurities and re-focus one's self on the worship of God.

Before this month the government promised the civilians to conduct new security plans, but we have seen more violence in Baghdad and other provinces like Diyala and AL Anbar as well. The terrorists used these attacks to show the security forces can't achieve the government's goals. We



NASA Photograph

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. The holy time usually starts in September and depends on the lunar cycle. The crescent moon, of the first phase of the lunar cycle marks the start of Ramadan

could see this during the demonstration in Ramadi where terrorists paraded the streets in a show of power.

Muslim leaders around the world have taken the next step to put a stop to the violence. During the Muslim conference in the holy city of Mecca, leaders stressed the unity of Sunni and Shia groups and asked them to put a stop to the sectarian violence. As a result of this meeting, many groups and tribes have agreed to join Maliki's reconciliation initiative in order to restore peace to their country.

Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki is working hard to achieve national security through many diplomatic meetings with the political blocs and Iraqi tribes to move the country from this critical situation to stability. The civilians are hoping to see the security after Ramadan especially after many groups recently agreed to join the political process.

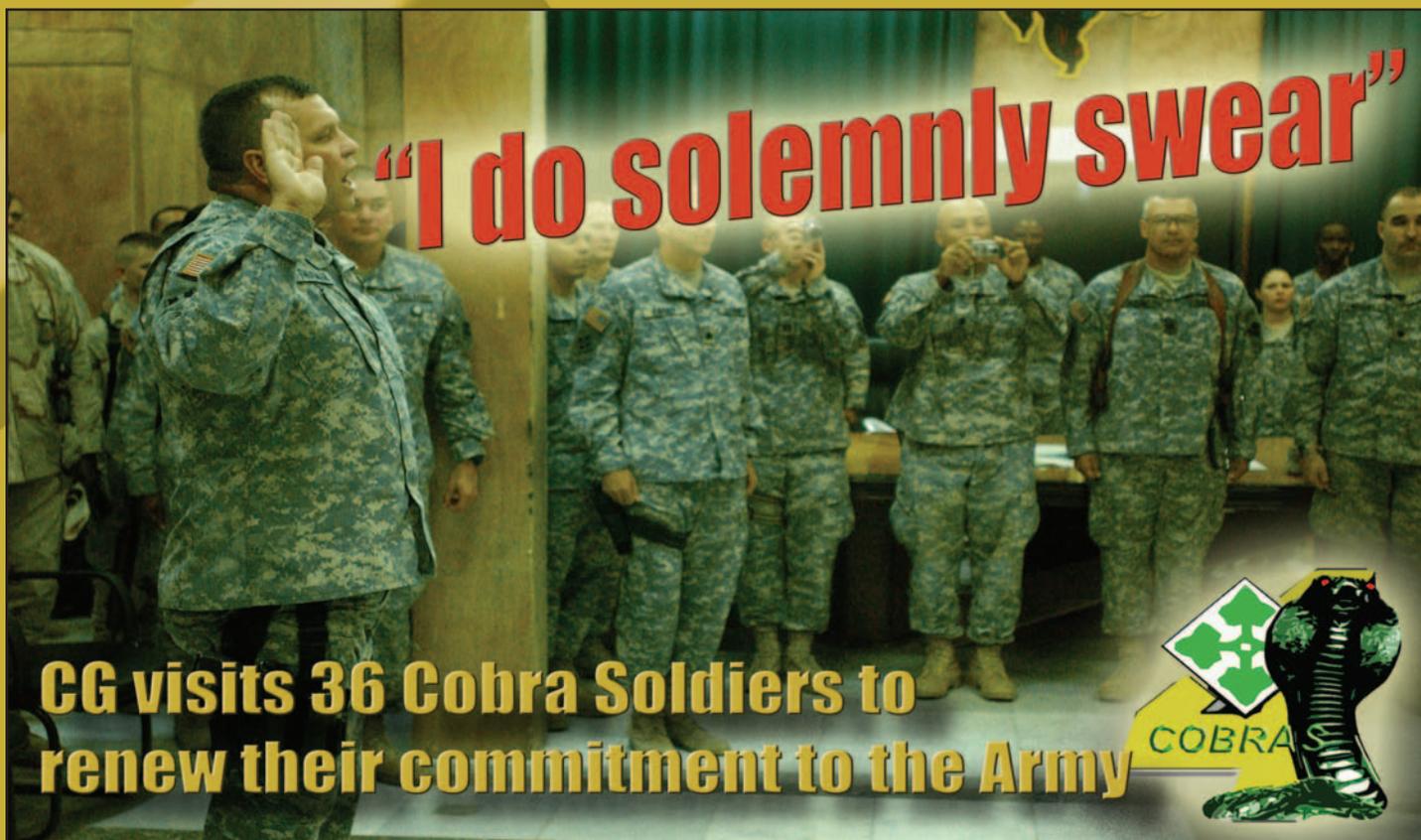


Photo by D. Saleeh

During the blessed month of Ramadan, Muslims all over the world abstain from food, drink, and other physical needs during the daylight hours. During Ramadan many muslim families prepare huge feasts after the sun sets.

Ramadan Kareem!

Happy Ramadan!



Story and photos by Spc. Jason Dangel

Thirty-six Soldiers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division "Cobras", re-enlisted inside former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's Presidential Palace in Baghdad's International Zone Tuesday.

The mass re-enlistment marked the Brigade's first large-scale retention event since the beginning of the new fiscal year Oct. 1.

The 4th Infantry Division Commanding General Maj. Gen. James D. Thurman made a surprise visit to read the oath of reenlistment as the "Cobra" Soldiers swore once again to serve and defend the United States of America.

"I have been in the Army 32 years," Thurman said to the Soldiers gathered inside the large conference room. "There hasn't been one minute during that time that I haven't enjoyed serving with Soldiers like you."

Thurman congratulated each Soldier and gave each of them a commander's coin in appreciation for their service.

Each Soldier was also given the opportunity to have their picture taken with Thurman, and had a chance to tell him why they continue to serve in the

greatest Army in the world.

"Staying in the Army was the best thing for me and my family," said Staff Sgt. Daniel Cruz, personnel noncommissioned officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"The Army has taken care of me, and I plan to make it my career," said Cruz, a 9-year combat veteran from El Paso, Texas."

In August, the 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div. became the first brigade in the Division to complete its re-enlistment goals to include initial-term, mid-term, and career Soldier re-enlistees for fiscal year 2006, said Sgt. 1st Class Keith Green, brigade career counselor, 4th BCT.

"We were actually prohibited from re-enlisting any more initial-term and career Soldiers until Oct. 1 since the Army had met its Retention Goals," Green said.

During that time, Green and the retention team re-enlisted approximately 600 Soldiers, surpassing objectives set forth by the department of the Army.

"As we enter the new fiscal year, our goal is to reenlist as many qualified

Soldiers who are eligible to receive the Deployment Bonus before we return to Fort Hood," Green said.

As the 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div. approaches the end of its mission and the beginning of redeployment, and as re-enlistments continue, Green said he and the Cobra Retention Team will continue to provide proactive retention guidance to ensure all Soldiers receive the most up-to-date career information.

For more information on reenlisting to stay with the Cobra Brigade or career opportunities please contact the 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div. Retention Office.



The 4th Inf. Div. Commanding General Maj. Gen. James Thurman poses with Staff Sgt. Daniel Cruz, HHC, 4th BCT, after Cruz and 35 other Cobra Soldiers reenlisted.

SAFETY FIRST! **Vehicle Crew Coordination**

Information provided by Sean Morril, 4th BCT Safety Officer

WHAT IS AN "EFFECTIVE CREW"?

- Effective crews are made up of assertive crewmembers who provide input to the Vehicle Commander.
- Each crewmember knows they are a member of the team and are willing to help fellow crewmembers without being asked.
- The vehicle climate is open but professional during the mission, Vehicle Commanders establish & maintain this climate.
- Crew After Action Reviews are constructive and seen as a learning experience to enhance future crew performance

CREW COORDINATION OBJECTIVES

- Establish and Maintain Team Relationships
- Mission Planning and Rehearsal
- Establish and Maintain Workload Levels
- Exchange Mission Information
- Cross-Monitor Performance

**GOOD CREWS
MAKE SAFETY
A PRIORITY!**



SAFETY



**EACH CREWMEMBER
IS A MEMBER
OF THE
TEAM!**

INDIVIDUAL COORDINATION

- **Communicate Positively**
- **Direct Assistance**
- **Announce Actions**
- **Offer Assistance**
- **Acknowledge Actions**
- **Be Clear & Precise**
- **Provide Vehicle Control & Hazard Advisories**
- **Coordinate Action Sequence & Timing so Crew Actions Mesh**

CONCLUSION

Crew Coordination & Communication is an art that good crews constantly improve. Practice & AARs are critical in making crew coordination better. It will help you & your crew better accomplish your mission and Prevent Accidents!

Cobra Fitness

Find your motivation

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle back home

4 Tips to keep you on track

#1 Regardless of what you think at the time, just pack the bag and go to the gym. Just get there. Even if you're sure that you'll just sit there on a bench, sulking about missing your TV show do it anyway. In 99 cases out of 100 something strange happens by the time you've changed and walk out into the gym, and you are motivated.

#2 As a rule of thumb, try to load up on carbs (pasta, rice, oatmeal, potatoes, rough bread) the meals before the workout, and top it off by a small snack about an hour before the actual workout. This will ensure that you're loaded with all the energy you need throughout the workout.

#3 One of the key elements of success is to set up measurable goals, and to keep raising the bar so that you are constantly challenged.

#4 Willpower can move mountains! Think about it - when you hit the gym without any real enthusiasm, perhaps with problems at work and your spouse in a bad mood, can you honestly say that you get the same kind of feeling in your muscles as when everything has been "right" the day before? I don't think so, for obvious reasons in order to get 100% out of your training, you MUST remain focused and push yourself beyond the limits all the time.



Cobra's Light

Words that touch the spirit

Reunion

By Chap (Capt.) Will Horton, 4th BCT Chaplain

Deployment changes relationships. Getting to know your mate, significant other, or family member can be a fun part of dealing with the changes during reunion. The question that begs to be answered is: Will both of you be willing to meet in the middle and redefine the direction of your relationship? To accomplish the goal of redefining your relationships, I suggest three positive points necessary to a positive adjustment to change:

✓ **Persistent Staying Power.** To clear the hurdle of hang-ups during the reunion, make the decision that you both will hang-in rather than hang-up on each other. Many emotions and facts will plague your discussions and dialogue in an attempt to regain some direction and purpose for the marriage. Successful marriages work toward a mutually decided vision that builds unity and oneness. "Teamwork makes the dream work." Deciding, before getting back together, that you will stick together and redefine your relationship provides the greatest potential for making the relationship successful.

✓ **Persistent Playing Power.** "Whose team are you on?" Conflicts can create opposing mates. Successful relationships will not focus on which person wins but on whether the marriage wins. Two kinds of games will help make a marriage win: 1) The "I am on YOUR team" game will make the other person feel like they are valued and validated. That builds confidence and trust and 2) The "Dating Game"-- the dating game starts from the beginning and discovers the other person for who they are in the present, no matter how long they've been married. New discoveries are fun while rediscovery of old flames and feelings build intimacy.

✓ **Persistent Praying Power.** Oneness is built around being together. However, separation for deployment is part of our duty to God and Country. The Apostle Paul, from the Bible, tells us how to handle separation: "Abstaining from sex is permissible for a period of time if you both agree to it, and if it's for the purpose of prayer and fasting--but only for such times. Then come back together again. Satan has an ingenious way of tempting us when we least expect it." (1 Corinthians 7:5 "The Message") Handle your separation, and your reunion through prayer and a joint agreement.

The 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div., would like to say good bye to the members of the 10th Combat Support Hospital Religious support team as they prepare to redeploy to Fort Carson, Colo.

Goodbye and Good luck Chap. (Maj.) Leathers and Staff Sgt. Mack.

God bless you! - Chap. (Capt.) Horton and Staff Sgt. Ocasio.



Staff Sgt. Ocasio

Chap. Horton

Chap. Leathers

Staff Sgt. Mack

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IT IS AN EMOTIONAL STRENGTH. IT IS A STRENGTH OF CHARACTER,
AND STRENGTH OF PURPOSE. THE STRENGTH TO DO GOOD TODAY,
AND THE STRENGTH TO DO WELL TOMORROW.

THE STRENGTH TO OBEY, AND STRENGTH TO COMMAND.
THE STRENGTH TO BUILD, AND STRENGTH TO TEAR DOWN.

THE STRENGTH TO GET YOURSELF OVER,
AND THE STRENGTH TO GET OVER YOURSELF.



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That is Stronger than the US Army.
Because there is nothing on this Green Earth
That is Stronger than a US Army Soldier.



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SGT'S TIME