

The Sandstorm

2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. - Vol. 1, Issue 3



**Medical Operations
in Rushdi Mullah
provide hope, health**

**Iraqi NCOs
graduate from
Warrior Leader
Course**

**Boxes of care:
How Americans
help Iraqi
children**

***Also inside: Making a difference in Yusufiyah, American
Indian Heritage Month and route-clearing with buffaloes***

The Sandstorm

The official magazine of the
Second Brigade Combat Team

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If you'd like to see something in this magazine, or if you'd like to make contributions, please e-mail us at com-mando_brigade@yahoo.com.

We are always striving to improve this publication. Remember, this is *your* magazine.

We reserve the right to edit for security, accuracy, propriety, clarity and space.

More information on the 2nd BCT Commandos can be found at www.CommandosOf2BCT.blogspot.com.

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In this issue



The Golden Dragons of 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, seize a terrorist outpost and turn it into a forward patrol base for U.S. forces defending the Iraqi people.

See *Golden Dragons*, page 7



Iraqi Army noncommissioned officers graduate from the Warrior Leader Course in Mahmudiyah and take the oath of service.

See *Iraqi NCOs*, page 4

Commander's Comments

Our first two months have been eventful.

While six Commandos have been lost in our efforts (and another 50 wounded), we can take great pride in knowing that we have already made our area of operations safer for the Iraqi people. Efforts of both the Polar Bears and the Golden Dragons have eliminated a major insurgent sanctuary - the Shakariyah Triangle - while the Wolverine Cavalry Squadron has made a major highway safe for travel. The Allons Battalion, in its partnership with the Baghdad Eagle Brigade of the Iraqi Army, has helped to conduct the first-ever multi-battalion operation and ensured security in the major city in our area - Mahmudiyah. The Gladiators' Operation Iron Claw has cleared over 4,747 kilometers of road and neutralized more than 60 improvised explosive devices. The Providers keep us well fed, well sup-



Kershaw

plied, and fix our weapons and vehicles - logging more miles than any other unit in the BCT. Task Force Vigilant provides security for the Victory Base Complex that is home to our division-level command.

We continue making roads safer for travel, clearing and building new ones when necessary; building new housing areas and schools; bringing new medical treatment facilities to needy families; our engineers are replacing water treatment facilities and running sewer lines as needed. We routinely speak with local leaders and townspeople in order to help develop emergent town councils and political representation for all Iraqis. We are working - and slowly winning - the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people.

Although our training has already begun to pay significant dividends, this mission continues to be about the acquisition and application of information. As we continue removing the threat of insurgents, the Iraqi people will increasingly feel more confident and empowered to deal with the enemy themselves. The Iraqi Army has already taken great strides to achieve

these ends; as mentioned before, we must never forget that it is the Iraqis who will defeat terror.

Our primary objectives for this deployment remain unchanged: to build and work hand-in-hand with the Iraqi Army and Police forces and to provide security to the Iraqi people.

To assist the Iraqi government in providing the essential services, governance tools, and economic stability for Iraq to be independent. To protect the force. This remains one of the most contested areas of greater Baghdad.

To the Commando families - this continues to be a challenging time for you, knowing that your loved ones are deployed to a hostile region of the world.

We hear of your recent achievements, including the fund raiser that earned over three thousand dollars for the brigade's Family Readiness Groups. I commend all of you - Soldiers and family members alike - for your efforts.

COMMANDOS!



CAMP STRIKER, Iraq — (From left) Nick Brokeshoulder, Summer Fuson, Kelly Etsitty, Sky Medicine Bear and Sharon Brokeshoulder of the Native Star Dance Team, and Cpl. Anthony Foy (center), paralegal noncommissioned officer with the brigade legal office, cut a cake in honor of American Indian Heritage Month at the Camp Striker dining facility here Nov. 3.

Photo by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT PAO

Mountain Soldiers swear in at Baghdad's Al-Faw palace

By Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie
2nd BCT Public Affairs NCOIC

BAGHDAD — Veterans Day is an American holiday for honoring veterans. It is celebrated on Nov. 11, but in Iraq, Veterans Day was not only a holiday for remembering war veterans.

More than 75 service members originating from 33 different countries took the oath of U.S. citizenship at a ceremony on Nov. 11 at Al-Faw Palace in Baghdad.

"Veterans Day is a day where we honor America's brave men and women," said Gen. George Casey, the Multi-National Division-Baghdad commander. "And today we will recognize America's newest citizens."

During the ceremony, Dr. Zalmay Khalizad, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, recalled becoming a U.S. citizen in 1984.

"I could not be prouder to stand here today," Khalizad said. "It is a great honor to be an American citizen. You're a part of history."

Although some of the service members lived in the United States all of their lives, their journey was not complete until after they swore in.

"I love doing this (being a Soldier) and I love everything about the United States — it is a great place to be," said Spc. Lorn Keo, a native of Thailand, who serves as a mechanic with the 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI).

"I originally joined the Army because I wanted to make a difference in the United States and now I can say that I have been a part of helping democracy in Iraq. It was a great feeling (after I swore in) — I have been working towards this goal for a long time."

After taking the oath of citizenship,

the service members received a U.S. flag, a certificate and a message from the president.

"Today the United States is not only your home," said President George Bush. "It is your country."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie, 2nd BCT PAO NCOIC

Sgt. Kirk Barclay, of the 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), swears in as a U.S. citizen at a ceremony in Baghdad Nov. 11.

Iraqi NCOs take oath of service at Mahmudiyah

By Spc. Chris McCann
2nd BCT Journalist

MAHMUDIYAH, Iraq — Graduations are always proud moments, and there was perhaps none prouder than when ten Iraqi soldiers of the 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, were presented with certificates and officially became noncommissioned officers in a ceremony at the Iraqi army base in Mahmudiyah Oct. 14.

The battalion, known as the Baghdad Eagles, has been working closely with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division's 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment, training and conducting missions in the Mahmudiyah area.

Col. Ali of the Baghdad Eagles and Lt. Col. Robert Morschauser, commander of the 2nd Bn., 15th FA Regt., attended the ceremony, as did Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Mahoney, 2nd BCT command sergeant major.

"It was a challenging course," said Alah Shimal Hassan, one of the graduates, "but there were many benefits, and we're ready to take it on. We are pleased by the rep-

resentation from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team and the distinguished Command Sgt. Maj. Mahoney and Col. Morschauser."

"The toughest part was map analysis," explained Hassan, "but we spent a lot of time on it."

He said the soldiers had been thirsting for a chance to prove their mettle in the course, despite the difficulty.

"We had wished for awhile to start to do the training," he added. "Our instructor was steadfast and did not shrink from the training sessions."

Now that service is not rewarded by the same corrupt methods as it was under the previous regime, instructor Master Sgt. Wesam Muhammed explained, there has been a change in the outlook, and Iraqi soldiers don't want corrupt promotions — only pay for their service.

"Our soldiers now associate service with pay," Muhammed said. "In our training, we have emphasized the nature of the work and their status (as soldiers). We are grateful to the United States and to the Army for helping reinforce the self-confidence of the soldiers and reinforcing all the ethics associated with military service."

Army father, two sons reunite in south Baghdad

By Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie
2nd BCT Public Affairs
NCOIC

CAMP STRIKER,
Iraq — During the Civil War and World War I, it was normal to see fathers and sons serving together in combat. Since then, it has been rare to see them serving together - until today.

Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Mahoney, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), command sergeant major, visited with his two sons, Pfc. Tyler Mahoney and 1st Lt. Ricky Mandello, Nov. 7 at Camp Striker.

Tyler, a medic with the 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, had been in Iraq less than two weeks when he was told that he was going to take a helicopter trip. He had no idea he was scheduled to meet up with his father and brother.

The 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Regt., commander was coming to visit our brigade and I asked him if he would bring my son," Mahoney said. "When I found out Tyler was coming, I contacted Ricky to see if he would be able to come."



Photo by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT PAO

(From left) Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Mahoney, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), command sergeant major, Pfc. Tyler Mahoney, of the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division and 1st Lt. Ricky Mandello, with the 1st Brigade, 34th Infantry Division, stand in front of the 2nd BCT headquarters Nov. 7 here. Mahoney, the father of Mandello and Tyler, had not seen his sons in a year.

Mandello, a platoon leader with the 1st Brigade, 34th Infantry Division, was near the end of his one-year tour at Camp Adder, Iraq, when he was contacted by his father, Mahoney, to see if he would be able to get to Camp Striker, Iraq, for a visit with Mahoney and Tyler.

Mandello was able to get a ride to Striker with one of the convoys that was transporting supplies.

After Mandello arrived at Striker he met up with his father, Mahoney, and went to greet Tyler as he stepped off the helicopter.

"It was an awesome feeling (to see my dad and brother)," Tyler said. "I have not seen them in a long time."

The three had not seen each other in about a year.

"The last time we were all together was last Christmas," Mahoney said.

While together, they visited palaces, took photos and reminisced.

Mahoney recalled memories of the boys when they were younger.

"My sons would dress up in Battle Dress Uniforms when they were younger - especially Ricky," Mahoney recalled.

"I also remember Tyler being born at Fort Hood, Texas, when I was a private first class."

Mandello and Tyler spoke of what

it was like having a father in the military and having to move from place to place.

"I remember anytime my dad was changing duty stations that it meant we were going on a road trip across country in a pop-up camper," Mandello said. "We have been from Texas to Alaska and Alaska to Georgia."

"I developed a lot of character by changing social statuses and making new friends when we moved," Tyler said.

Mandello and Tyler also commented on their feelings about his father serving in the military for 23 years.

"My father has been in the Army longer than I have been alive," Tyler commented.

"It takes a lot of courage to come over here (to Iraq) more than one time and my father has come over here numerous times," Mandello said. "I have seen some of the sacrifices my father has made, and (by my brother and me serving in the military) we are paying back some of the sacrifices he made."

When Mahoney's sons were old enough, he drove them to the recruit-

Is your unit going on an interesting mission? Do you have an issue on your mind? Let the Public Affairs Office know so we can put it in the Sandstorm! Email us at: commando_brigade@yahoo.com or stop by the Public Affairs Office at the Camp Striker Tactical Operations Center.

See Reunion, page 11

Soldiers pay final respects to Spc. Thomas Hewett

By Spc. Chris McCann
2nd BCT Journalist

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq — “It seems unfair for a man who had not served even a year in the Army to be taken from us. But it’s young men who die in war.”

Chaplain (Capt.) Danny Wilson’s words hung over the crowd assembled to mourn the death of Thomas Hewett Oct. 21 at Camp Striker.

Hewett, who served in Troop B, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, died Oct. 13 of wounds suffered in an improvised explosive device detonation Sept. 21.

“Thomas had a family back home ... he loved his family more than anything, more than his own life,” said Staff Sgt. Michael Bobulis, Hewett’s section sergeant. “He wouldn’t want us to cry, be sad, or feel sorry for him.”



Hewett

Hewett enlisted in the Army in 2005, and was assigned to B Troop in January of 2006. The Soldiers of his troop remember his sense of humor.

“He was always quick with a smart remark or a smirk,” said friend Pfc. Jonathan Williams, a native of Mount Pleasant, Texas, who met Hewett while inprocessing at Fort Drum.

He recalled a time that Hewett, sleepy, went into the laundry room instead of his barracks room and crawled up onto his “bunk dryer.”

“He looked so peaceful there, none of us bothered to wake him,” Williams said.

Hewett was also described as an excellent Soldier.

“He never complained, and he went out of his way to make things better,” said Sgt. Bryan Dunaway, a section sergeant with Troop B.

“That’s all you can ask of a Soldier.”

Hewett’s only difficulty was with running, his troop mates said. “We carried him more than he ran,” Williams said. “But he’s running like the wind now, by God.”

Hewett’s awards include a Bronze Star Medal, a Purple Heart, a National Defense Service Medal, an Iraqi Campaign Medal, an Army Commendation Medal, a Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, a Good Conduct Medal, an Army Service Ribbon, and a Combat Action Badge. He is survived by his wife, Pfc. Vina Miller, and his son, Clifton Hewett.

The legendary resting place of cavalry troopers was mentioned only once at the memorial.

“Do me one last favor,” Bobulis asked in an emotional voice.

“Mark the way to Fiddler’s Green.”

Spc. Nick Rogers honored at memorial ceremony

By Spc. Chris McCann
2nd BCT Journalist

MAHMUDIYAH, Iraq — Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) gathered the evening of Oct. 29 to pay their respects to Spc. Nicholas Rogers, who was killed in a firefight with terrorists at a battle position south of Baghdad Oct. 21.

A medic by military occupation and an emergency medical technician before enlisting, he quickly manned a machine gun to defend his unit.

Pfc. Isaac Severman, a native of Albuquerque, N.M., and a close friend of Rogers, remembered him as a devoted family man and a good Soldier.

“I never saw him lose his cool, and he never got crazy angry. He was really cool, really collected,” Severman said.

“I spent a lot of time with him. He had a good sense of humor, kind of understated. He talked about his family. Every day, you knew where to find him – at the Internet café, talking to his family,” Severman said.

Sgt. Jason Lane was Rogers’ squad leader.



Rogers

“He was enthusiastic about being a medic... he was a very compassionate person,” he said.

“He had an unbelievable desire to help. ...He was extremely professional, very by-the-book. There’s a certain time where Soldiers feel relaxed in their work environment. Rogers was always at parade rest.”

Rogers was also remembered as a great fan of Star Wars, never hesitating to show off his memorabilia or movie clips, and a card player.

Lane noted that Soldiers by their trade are expected to be willing to make the ultimate sacrifice.

“It’s an expectation that some Soldiers may shy away from,” he said. “Specialist Rogers did not. He died defending his men and attacking the enemy.”

Rogers’ awards and decorations include a Bronze Star Medal, a Purple Heart, an Army Commendation Medal with a “V” device, an Army Good Conduct Medal, a National Defense Service Medal, an Iraq campaign Medal, a Global War on Terrorism Medal, an Overseas Service Ribbon, an Army Service Medal and a Combat Medical Badge.

Rogers is survived by his wife Kelly, his 3-year-old daughter Jocelyn, and a child expected in January.

Top NCO visits Golden Dragons at Yusufiyah

By Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie
2nd BCT Public Affairs NCOIC

CAMP DRAGON, Iraq — With his body propped up against his defensive position, he peers through his scope, looking for terrorists and anyone else who would do his unit harm. He knows the Soldiers to his left and right are counting on him. He has not had a shower or a hot meal in six days, but he remains focused — ready to defend his comrades.

Spc. Jon Born, a marksman for 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), and other members of his unit sit for days at their battle positions anticipating the enemy, but what they do not anticipate is a friendly face showing up to see how they are doing.

Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Riling, Multi-National Division — Baghdad command sergeant major, did just that when he visited the Soldiers Nov. 1 at the Yusufiyah power plant. The plant is located on the Euphrates River, near Sadr al Yusufiyah, approximately 25 miles southwest of Baghdad.

“I like to get out and visit with our Soldiers as often as I can. I think the Soldiers appreciate when their senior leaders take the time to talk to them and stand side-by-side with them during a mission,” Riling said. “As a leader, I think it is important to encourage them and recognize Soldiers for outstanding performance.”

Having only been in Iraq a couple of months, the Soldiers of 2-14 Inf. Regt., also known as the “Golden Dragons,” have been manning the Yusufiyah power plant since Oct. 23.

They originally marched to a battle position on nearby highway and provided overwatch on the power plant, took perimeter security and then secured the power plant.

“The Soldiers of 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div., have recently been attached to Multi-National Division — Baghdad, and like their predecessors from 10th Mtn. Div.’s 1st BCT, have shown outstanding dedication, performance and leadership,” Riling said. “They have quickly and seamlessly transitioned into their role and have added to MND-B’s strength and capabilities. It’s a testament to the Army’s doctrine of modularity.”

Securing the power plant was important to the 2nd BCT because it was believed that terrorists used the area as a haven to stage attacks against the Government of Iraq and MND-B Forces.

Since the power plant was secured, the “Golden Dragons” have been manning the site every day. They are looking for possible terrorist activity in or around the area and often do not have interaction with anyone besides their battle buddies — so the MND-B noncommissioned officer’s visit was a morale booster.

“It was good to see Command Sgt. Maj. Riling out here,” said Spc. Michael Wahlers of the 2-14 Inf. Regt. personal security detachment. “We have worked hard to secure the power plant, and it’s great to be recognized for it.”

A fellow Soldier said he thought the visit was important too.

“It is good to see that other higher-ranking officials are seeing the valuable importance of the thermal power plant, now known as Camp Dragon, and to see how the Soldiers of 2-14 Inf. Regt. are putting in long hours to build up proper security and to keep clearing the site while continuing combat patrols and local route security,” said Staff Sgt. Mike Godlewski, PSD NCO for the battalion.

During Riling’s visit, he thanked the Soldiers and presented coins for their hard work.

“The Soldiers of 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div., are operating in one of the most dangerous sections within MND-B’s area of operations,” Riling said. “Through their diligence and professionalism, they have battled terrorists and recently gained control and strengthened the security of a strategically located power plant. They are dedicated to their mission and working with the Iraqi Security Forces toward a brighter future for the people of Iraq.”

Like Born, the Soldiers of the 2-14 will continue to operate out of the power plant until it can be safely returned to the Iraqi people.



Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Riling, Multi-National Division — Baghdad, takes a minute to look over the battle position manned by Spc. Jon Born, a marksman with 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Division, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

Soldiers help Iraqi children through support of Americans

By Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie
2nd BCT Public Affairs NCOIC

RADWANIYAH, Iraq — Jasmine, an Iraqi child with unkempt hair and dressed in tattered clothes, reached out for a pair of shoes.

She was not concerned with the brand, style or even the size of the shoes. She simply wanted a pair to replace the sandals she was wearing — sandals which were too small and let her toes touch the pavement when she walked.

Providing needed items such as this was a highlight for Multi-National Division — Baghdad Soldiers from the 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), who assisted in handing out anything from shoes to shampoo to Iraqi children like Jasmine at the Civil-Military Operations Center Oct. 28 in Radwaniyah, Iraq, southeast of Baghdad.

“I wanted to be able to do something nice to help the community and show the Iraqis we are here to help them,” said Michelle Winicki, a medic with the 210th BSB.

The items the Soldiers passed out to the children came from the support of the American people in the form of a Victory Box, filled with items to give to the Iraqis.

The Victory Boxes were started by Mary Halleck, of Colleyville, Texas. Halleck originally started sending boxes to Soldiers who had no families to send them anything.

After sending numerous care packages to Soldiers, Halleck received a letter from a Soldier asking her if she would be able to send school supplies to the Iraqi children.

After a few fundraisers, Halleck and her friends came up with the idea of Victory Boxes — boxes containing goods needed for the Iraqi people to help them in their fight for freedom.

“I’ve never really done anything for

my country,” Halleck said. “I envisioned our (American) families sending boxes to the people of Iraq through the Soldiers.”

The boxes were intended to help the Iraqis as they train to defend their country, get their economy going, clothe their families and educate their children.

“The support (that the Iraqi people are receiving) is great,” said Sgt. Billie Caperton, a medic with 210th BSB. “It feels like the Iraqis want us here, and it feels good that the American people understand they (the Iraqi people) are in a tough situation and want to help the Iraqis.”

Unlike the majority of children in the United States who might ask for the latest video game, name-brand clothes or a new toy, the Iraqi children ask for basic necessities that most take for granted — items like shampoo, shoes and toothpaste.

Most of the children asking for the items have never had the money to buy products to wash their hair or brush their teeth. For them, these items are special.

The simple act of giving the Iraqi children basic items has led to the discovery of dangerous weapons and improvised-explosive devices.

Sometimes when the Iraqi children recognize Soldiers who have helped them, they show the Soldiers where such dangerous weapons are located.

“Giving the children items they need helps them get over the fear of people (Soldiers) in uniform,” said



Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie, 2nd BCT PAO NCOIC
Sgt. Billie Caperton (left), a medic with the 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, hands an Iraqi child a toy during a visit to the Civil Military Operations Center Saturday in Radwaniyah, southeast of Baghdad. The items given to children were sent from American citizens in the form of victory boxes — boxes that contain basic supplies to help the Iraqi children.

Capt. Mark Griffin, a civil affairs officer, who operates with the 2nd BCT. “It shows them that people in uniform are not bad.”

With the generosity of people like Halleck, Soldiers are able to help the Iraqi people.

“This is a great program because there is such a huge need for supplies in Iraq,” Griffin said. “When the American people get involved, it helps us push products out and give the Iraqi people a better shot at standing up their country. They are given the things they need to survive.”

Currently, the 2nd BCT Soldiers are helping get these special boxes out to the Iraqi people.

Overall, there have been approximately 5,000 boxes sent to Soldiers.

“These boxes are from the American people to the Iraqi people through the Soldiers,” Halleck added.

With the support of the American people, Iraqi children like Jasmine will be able to wear a pair of shoes that fit, wash their hair and brush their teeth.

Opinion

Soldiers want to finish mission, return home to loved ones

By Spc. Todd Selge
5th Bn., 20th Inf. Regt.

When you hear news about the war in Iraq you usually hear it from a high-level Army spokesperson or you hear the media describe it as "another deadly day."

The view on the ground from the Soldier's perspective is often overlooked.

We are the ones who live the conflict every day, who see the progress day-to-day. We are the ones who experience the sorrows, who interact with the people, and who see the enemy's effort to undo every good thing the Iraqi people and coalition forces have done.

What every Soldier wants is to succeed in our mission and go home to our families. The things we do each day allow us the ability to do just that. The 3rd Platoon, Company A, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry, has seen many successes.

The most important is getting the Iraqi security forces organized and capable of handling every problem that may arise in the future. Accomplishing this happens on all levels, from the commanders down to the average private.

We have a training program through which Iraqi Army soldiers learn the same basic tasks every U.S. Army Soldier knows.

The American Soldiers develop friendships with the Iraqi soldiers and police. We joke, eat, talk about family and conduct missions together. Every day, Soldiers are working hand-in-hand with Iraqis, teaching them to succeed in their jobs.

Since we have been here, the

Iraqi security forces have been the main effort – finding countless caches, killing or capturing anti-Iraqi personnel and thwarting attacks targeted at coalition forces. They continue to undermine the enemy and gain the confidence of their fellow countrymen.

We are also building important and long-lasting relationships with the residents of surrounding communities. We go to schools and neighborhoods giving the kids backpacks full of supplies, handing out candy and hearing the concerns of the people. We ask about their basic services, such as food, water, electricity and fuel. We hand out cards with hotline numbers to address any problems, and we shake hands.

We see the smiles of a hopeful generation and we see the efforts of the anti-Iraqi forces to shatter these dreams. There has been a major effort by AIF to sell and hand out a wide variety of realistic-looking toy guns.

The AIF's hope is for the Iraqi army and coalition forces to engage the children, but with constant training and the help of the communities, we will yet again foil their plans to promote chaos and hatred.

Every day we interact and help Iraq grow, we are one more day closer to success and one day closer to seeing our families.

What does the average Soldier think every day?

He wants to accomplish the mission. He wants to see the smiles of the Iraqi people last. He is grateful for everything he has back home and he wishes the very same freedom he is fighting for upon the country of Iraq.

The Powder Keg: Views from around the AO

"What does Veterans Day mean to you?"



"It's a day showing respect for Soldiers and what they've done in the past to make our nation better."

-Staff Sgt. Alwyn Jones,
HHC, 2-15 Field Artillery
Regiment



"Recognition of sacrifices Soldiers have made in conflicts around the world to defend the American way of life and freedom."

-Spc. Kent Davis, HHT,
1st Squadron, 89th
Cavalry Regiment



"A time to remember all those who have served in the common defense of our nation."

-Maj. David Borowicz,
HHC, 2nd Brigade Special
Troops Battalion



"It makes me think about the Soldiers in different wars who fought and gave their lives there."

-Pfc. Monica Marshall,
Task Force Vigilant

Soldiers extend a helping hand in Rushdi Mullah

By Spc. Chris McCann
2nd BCT Journalist

RUSHDI MULLAH, Iraq—The first few were hesitant, coming in by ones and twos, but soon the floodgates opened and the citizens of Rushdi Mullah came from all over town to receive medical care for a variety of ailments Oct. 19 at a Multi-National Division – Baghdad medical operation.

The medical operation was conducted by Soldiers of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), in the small town of Rushdi Mullah. It was intended mostly to get an idea of what medical supplies were needed and to determine what clinics and health care providers were available in the area.

“It’s what we came to do, besides taking care of our own,” said Spc. Carrielynn Spillis, a native of Toledo, Ohio, and a medic with Company C, 210th Brigade Support Battalion, attached to 4th Battalion, 31st In-

fantry Regiment. “It’s nice being able to come here and help them.”

Kazar, a resident of Rushdi Mullah, brought his cousin’s son, Mustafa, to the operation to have the 1-year-old boy’s hand treated for an injury.

Medics washed it and applied anti-bacterial ointment and explained, through an interpreter, that each finger would have to be wrapped separately to keep them from healing together.

“I’m glad the Americans came to help,” Kazar said.

“We’re planning treatment ... to provide for local civilians in the area,” said Sgt. Jason Lane, a medic with 4-31 Inf. Regt.

“We had a very good turnout, didn’t see anything too extreme, and we have a better idea of what to expect in this area.”

“Initially they were fairly timid,” he said. “By the end of the operation, they were more personable, particularly the children.”

The Soldiers brought bags of toys – everything from plush animals to squeezable rubber ducks, which seemed to transcend the language barrier and brought smiles.

Initially, the operation was an-

nounced over loudspeakers throughout the neighborhood; but after a poor showing to start the operation, Soldiers went door-to-door to get the word out.

“When we did the foot patrol with announcements, we saw a huge change (in turnout),” said Maj. Robert Griggs, a native of Colusa, Calif., and plans officer for 4-31 Inf. Regt.

It wasn’t only the medics that made the operation work.

“We went out to distract the enemy so the medics could act,” said Pfc. James Cook, Company D, 4-31 Inf. Regt. “We set up three traffic control points to search vehicles and patrolled the areas ... It was all quiet.”

“We kept an eye on things to make sure Soldiers didn’t get hurt. It was a good patrol,” said Pfc. Samuel Rhodes, also of Co. D.

“It’s a positive step in the war on terror,” said 1st Lt. Aaron Brooks, of Syracuse, N.Y., medical platoon leader, 4-31 Inf. Regt.

“The Iraqis trust us enough to seek health care, and we are willing to give it in any way possible. ... The end state should be that we help support the Ministry of Health to do its own

Sgt. Jason Lane and Sgt. Christian Marsh both of 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, treat Mustafa, an Iraqi child, for a hand injury during a medical operation at Rushdi Mullah, Iraq, Oct 18. The operation was primarily to determine what medical supplies the community needed, but many people were treated for injuries and illness.



photo by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT PAO

From *Reunion*, page 5

ing station and told them to pick which branch of service they wanted to join. Mandello and Tyler picked the Army. Mahoney's third son, Jeremy, chose the Air Force.

Mandello joined the Army Reserves originally as an enlisted Soldier and the other two sons chose to serve as enlisted active-duty service members.

"I don't expect my children to spend their lives in the military as I have, but I expect them to do their duty while they are in and give something back to the country," Mahoney said. "I think the military is one of the best methods for allowing men and women to mature and gain some experience. In the military people learn things they do not learn in the civilian world."

Although Mahoney has been on many deployments and was often away, he always made time for his children.

"I was on block leave after my first Operation Iraqi Freedom tour when I attended Tyler's graduation from Basic Combat Training in Fort Leonard Wood, Miss.," Mahoney said. "And I attended Jeremy's graduation from Air Force Basic Training at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas before I deployed to Afghanistan."

After Tyler graduated from Advanced Individual Training his first duty assignment was the 1st Bn., 501st Inf. Regt., 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div., formerly known as the 2nd Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment.

Mahoney was a charter member of the 1st Bn., 501st Inf. Regt.

"I was a sergeant serving with the 2nd Bn., 17th Inf. Regt., when it was reflagged to the 1st Bn., 501st Inf. Regt., in the late '80s," Mahoney said.

Mahoney also recalled what it was like to have Tyler when he was a private first class and making less

Soldiers find, destroy cache, safe house

BAGHDAD — Soldiers of Company A, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), discovered an extensive cache and improvised explosive device workshop in a combat operation Oct. 29.

The raid netted 32 five-gallon jugs of acid, 20 bags of potassium nitrate and large amounts of other explosives and IED-making materials such as crush-wire trigger mechanisms, blasting caps, magnesium powder, shape charges,

Composition B, mortar rounds and detonation cord.

Machine guns, a suicide belt and a professional-grade video camera were also found in the cache.

Additionally, a welding machine was found at the site, along with plaster and a saw for creating and filling shape charges.

In one mold, the plaster was wet when the Soldiers arrived at the house.

The explosives were destroyed by an explosive ordnance disposal team.

than \$1,000 a month.

"It was no tougher then than it is today," Mahoney stated. "You realize you may not have everything you want, but you have everything you need."

Now that Tyler is a private first class and in the military like his father, he reflects on the pride he feels while in uniform.

"I think joining the military is something everyone should do – at least for a little while," Tyler said. "I feel that my father is the best infantryman, my brother is the best engineer and I am the best medic."

Mandello, who originally was an enlisted Soldier, decided to switch to the officer corps so that he would be more involved with the decisions made in the military.

"I enlisted in the military 10 years ago and I got commissioned because I felt I could have impact on what the Soldiers are doing. I wanted to be a part of the planning process and help to make decisions," Mandello said.

Although Mandello has been an officer for two years, he has yet to be saluted by his father.

"I don't salute Ricky because I like to make him mad," Mahoney said.

Since Mandello has been in the Army he has been deployed twice in

support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He did a tour in Iraq and volunteered as a platoon leader so he could deploy again.

"I think it is a great opportunity (being in Iraq) to bring democracy to a part of the world that has little experience with it. I am proud to be here," Mandello commented.

"I think serving in Iraq is an honorable thing to do and every American has an obligation to serve their country in some form or fashion."

Tyler, a first-term Soldier, is on his first tour to Iraq.

"I do not worry about my sons (in Iraq) any more than I worry about the rest of the Soldiers in the Army," Mahoney said. "I trust in the training that the Army provides to the Soldiers - to include my sons - and the quality of leadership the Army produces."

After Mahoney's sons departed Striker, he took a moment to share his thoughts.

"When I see my children who are now grown up and serving the nation in uniform I have a proud feeling," Mahoney said. "I have the deepest respect for what my sons are doing for the nation, just like the rest of America's youth serving in uniform."



Medics from the 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), carry a wounded Iraqi to a medical-evacuation helicopter at Forward Operating Base Gator Swamp southeast of Baghdad.

Photo by Maj. David Hernandez, Co. C, 210th Brigade Support Battalion

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