

# THE COALITION CHRONICLE

Volume 2, Issue 12

December 2007

## A Glimpse of the Past

*1st Cav. troops address  
issues, security at the  
National Museum of Iraq*



IA senior NCOs gather • MRAPs hit the streets

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## THE COALITION CHRONICLE

The Official Magazine of  
Multi-National Corps-Iraq

December 2007  
Volume 2, Issue 12

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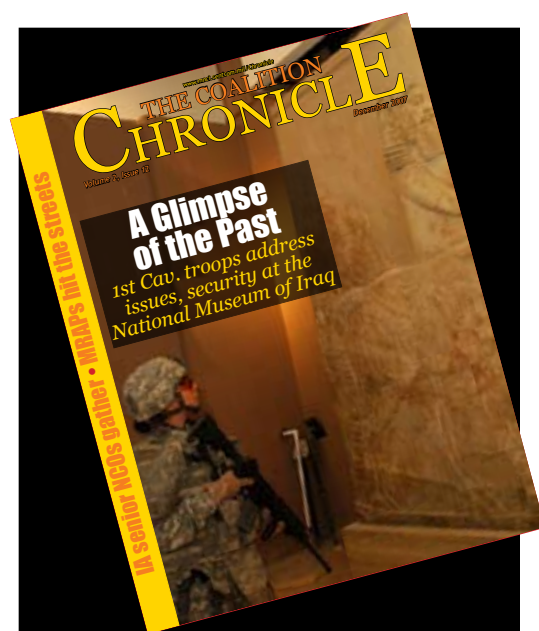
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### This month's covers

**Up front:** Sgt. Cynthia White, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, looks at a sculpture during a tour of the Iraqi National Museum in Baghdad Oct. 31. Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim.

**On the back:** Marines with Regimental Combat Team-2 wait for an Osprey to land during an exercise at Al Asad Air Base Oct. 23. Photo by Cpl. Michael Haas.

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# COMMANDER'S VOICE

One of the things I like most about my job is the unique perspective from which I am able to view activities on the battlefield. From my vantage point, I'm able to witness operations ranging from the smallest squad and platoon-sized efforts to huge corps-level undertakings. A particularly interesting process I get to observe is how strategic gains – the big-picture developments that shape the outcome of a conflict – result from the everyday activities of our great Multi-National Corps-Iraq Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines.

Although you may not realize it, the small tactical successes you achieve every day in your area of operation have a huge effect on the situation here in Iraq when combined with the efforts of your fellow troops in other parts of the country. In fact, significant security gains across Iraq are directly related to activities that many of you think of as just another day's work.

After rising steadily for more than two years, attack levels across Iraq reversed course in June. A development of this magnitude does not simply just happen. The foundation of this success was put in place early this year as we surged forces and operations. Each patrol you conducted, each joint security station or combat outpost you established, each time you ventured into a new area and helped tamp down the violence, all added to the momentum we're now experiencing. You know better than others that our work is dangerous, tough, challenging and noble. The sacrifice it requires is monumental, but I assure you our efforts are not in vain.

Now more than 20 weeks since the surge was realized in its entirety, attacks across Iraq are at levels not seen since the spring of 2005. Tangible signs of progress abound. Concerned Iraqis all across the country are volunteering to help provide security in their neighborhoods. Local governments are increasing in competence



**Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno**  
**MNC-I Commander**

and capacity. And in Iraq's capital, displaced families – people who had fled Baghdad to escape the fighting earlier this year – are returning home to resume their lives.

If you've been following the news lately, you might have noticed that the media is starting to acknowledge the progress as well. Pages that once bore stories of chaos and carnage are featuring more and more reports of how things in Iraq are changing for the better. Markets are open later, parks are filled with people, and life in Iraq is starting to regain some semblance of normalcy. Iraqis far and wide are regaining a sense of hope, and people around the world are taking notice.

Such progress and the good news stories that accompany it are the contributions to security and stability of your selfless service and incredible dedication to the mission here. We have come a long way because of your courageous efforts and you deserve the recognition.


In the midst of such encouraging developments, we all must take special care to stay focused on moving forward. Given the current atmosphere of hope and progress, it would be easy for some to get caught up in the moment. This we must avoid at all costs. We are on our way, but the mission is far from accomplished. Ultimate success in Iraq will take years,

and it won't be marked with a victory party or a peace treaty.

Right now momentum is on our side, but it is not yet irreversible. The current security improvements have bought us time to allow for governance and economics to move forward. During this period, the Iraqi government must work to expand its capacity, improve essential services and reach out to citizens in need.

We must remain vigilant at all times. Our foes are still capable and seek opportunities to inflict carnage on innocent Iraqis. On Nov. 23, for example, an explosion struck Baghdad's Shorja

Market, killing eight civilians and wounding 28 others. The bomb was disguised as a package of goods and placed by the side of the road. Ball bearings were later found at the scene of the attack, indicating the bomb was rigged to cause as many casualties as possible. In the past, such an event might have worked to inflame sectarian tensions. Now it has only served to strengthen the resolve of the Iraqi people. Today, Shorja Market remains open and is flourishing. The signs are clear that regular Iraqis do not agree with the extremist views held by fringe elements of various sectarian groups.

Oftentimes I hear people speak of how the current situation in Iraq would have been unthinkable six months ago. A more accurate assessment is that the present state of affairs would have been impossible if not for the magnificent efforts of the amazing men and women who make up our Corps. In all that you do, you are truly making a difference. The road forward may be marked by tough days, but I'm confident it's a route the Multi-National Corps-Iraq will deftly navigate. Lasting progress cannot be achieved overnight. However, your daily tactical successes combined with your compassion, courage and commitment have us moving in the right direction. 



# CSM's CORNER

**D**uring the 13 months the corps headquarters has been in theater, I've drafted all manner of correspondence that relates to those on the streets and in the fields, cities, towns and mulhallas of Iraq. With the aid of many great men and women far smarter than I, I've attempted to pass on lessons learned, TTPs and my own general observations. In every instance, my comments have traditionally been directed at those who keep themselves at the tip of the spear.

Just this afternoon, while passing the security desk outside of the commanding general's office, I asked one of his MPs, "How are you doing today," to which he responded, "I'd rather be back on the street." I cannot count the number of times I've engaged those that work in corps, division, brigade, battalion and even company orderly rooms who tell me they'd rather be outside the wire.

I often stop and think what would happen if everyone was outside the wire? Who'd ensure our pay was straight? Who'd process all those awards for valor and merit that stack up on my desk every day? Who'd process the promotion for the Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine who warrants it? Who'd be there to record the devotion, selflessness, merit and valor of our troops? Who'd fight to highlight the contributions of the same?

Who'd care for those that are wounded or injured? Who'd be there to help us mend the emotional scars we sustain as a result of our extended and repeated deployments? Who'd help us rationalize that which irrational men and women do to one another? Who'd ensure that lawlessness does not take root in our COBs, FOBs and major bases throughout the country? Who'd investigate those incidents wherein which what little we bring into theater is taken from us by those who have no respect for others?

Who'd cook or supervise the preparation of all those meals that mean so much to those that do don armor, turn wrenches, pay, protect, heal, fuel, process, maintain and sustain all that must be done to keep the corps relevant and ready?

Who'd be there to sift through the mounds of information that comes into every headquarters every hour of every day in order to turn the same into actionable intelligence? Who'd be there to paint the picture of the operating environment that a company, battery or troop commits itself to each day?

Who'd be there to take the intelligence picture and develop the courses of action or orders that commit the corps fighting strength? Who'd be there to assess and then recommend the best possible solution to a given problem set?

If everyone were outside the wire, who'd coordinate all that goes into moving nearly three thousand trucks on the roads of Iraq each night? Who'd be there to link assets to cargo and logistics convoys to their security elements?

Who'd be there to launch, operate, and maintain the TUAVs that provide real time video and SIGINT support? Who'd be there to build and maintain the data link that gets the real-time



**Command Sgt. Maj.  
Neil Ciotola  
MNC-I Command  
Sergeant Major**

***We can't all be  
outside the wire.***

feeds from these systems to commanders on the ground?

If everyone were flying, who'd do the phase maintenance on the aircraft that provide a decisive advantage to Coalition Forces? Who'd repair all the LRUs that not only keep our aircraft flying, but our tanks, Bradleys, Strykers, MRAPS and UAHs in the fight? Who'd run that FARP? Just the other day, while flying from Balad to VBC, I asked an aircraft commander the duration of a typical day's mission. He responded: "About six hours." Last time I checked a UH60, AH64, OH58 or CH47 could only fly about two to two and a half hours on a full load of fuel. Contrary to what we see at the movies, attack helicopters do run out of ammunition in the middle of an engagement. If everyone were outside the wire, who'd keep those Apaches and Kiowa Warriors flying? You know, the ones that have saved all of our lives on countless occasions.


**A**s I sift through the mounds of awards that come across my desk each week, I realize every maintenance operation we have in most — if not all — instances is operating at far less than 90 percent assigned strength. As I review those same awards I see the same trend: maintenance teams across the corps that maintain every fleet of vehicles we have at better than 90 percent FMC. So who would keep us rolling if everyone were outside the wire? Who'd order, ship, receive, process, stock, install and assess all the repair parts we create the demand for, if everyone was outside the wire?

Who'd manage the ordnance operation of the corps? Who'd be the one to recommend or ultimately divert the maintenance assets that always seem to be in such short supply? Who'd choreograph the logistics fight of the corps if everyone were outside the wire?

So who does bring in, move about and coordinate all those MWR/USO visits we get throughout the year? How many folks did it take for you to realize the autograph, or photo op of the singer, entertainer, UFC, WWE personality or cheerleader you think is "hot" or hold in high esteem?

How much stuff do you need to do your job every day? How much stuff do you put your hands on each day that is critical to our success or general comfort every day? Who requested, tracked and issued all that stuff we consume each day — and I'm not talking about food?

Who's training the IA, IP, ICO and leadership of this country? While many move throughout the depth and breadth of the country to facilitate the same, there are countless others that manage our ability to do so. How much money have we invested in this country and our efforts? Who tracks it all? Who disburses it all?

I could go on and on, but you'd lose interest and I've more to do this day; but I think you get the point. The same general outline that has wrought us so much success is the same principle that sustains our respective branches of service. You must build from the inside and work your way out. You must establish a firm foundation and then build upon the same. Those very things that frustrate us — a lack of capacity within the various institutions of our Iraqi allies — is the very thing that affords all of us to do what must be done each day. For every trooper walking the street, there are countless others who support and sustain the same. Where it not for all those that commit themselves to supporting the fight, there would be no fight in us. 

# COALITION NEWS BRIEFS



## Southern Baghdad sheiks come together

**BAGHDAD** — More than a dozen sheiks and other influential leaders from southern Baghdad congregated on neutral territory Nov. 10 at Camp Striker.

Among the leaders present was the mayor of Mahmudiyah, Mouyad Fadil, and Lt. Col. Mohammed Fatkan al Farhan, commander of the 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division.

The forum was opened and facilitated by Col. Dominic Caraccilo, 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division commander.

“We’ve recognized the importance of the sheiks. The importance of the tribes is absolutely decisive to the success we will achieve here in Iraq,” Caraccilo said. “For so long you have heard empty promises and we have heard empty promises, and together we’ve promised each other to do better and it’s time now to fulfill those promises.”

Sheik Kadem Shibli lauded the American hosts for recognizing the sheiks’ position in the Iraqi culture. “The sheik is very important in this region,” he said through an interpreter. “Tribes are the infrastructure of our Iraqi community.” ☎



## CLCs help find caches, stop insurgents

**FOB KALSU** — Concerned local citizens played a key role in three incidents removing insurgents and their resources from Arab Jabour Nov. 8.

In Arab Jabour, concerned citizens brought a large cache to Soldiers of Company D, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga., conducting operations in the area.

The rounds, dynamite, projectile, detonation cord and command wire were destroyed in a controlled detonation.

The other contents of the cache were collected and taken in for further examination. ☎



## Iraqi, U.S. Soldiers work together to save lives

**NINEVAH** — The Iraqi Army took the lead from Coalition Forces in western Ninevah province when it comes to fighting the enemies of a safe and free Iraq.

Even though the army is proving its soldiers have the competence to handle the task at hand, there are still times when they are grateful to have their American counterparts watching their backs.

That was just the case the morning of Oct. 22, when Soldiers from Company F, 51st Infantry Regiment were riding along with the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 3rd IA Division, to conduct a series of cordon and search operations in villages west of Bi’aj.

During a trip to the target villages in the middle of the desert an IED detonated on the convoy.

“The first thing that went through my mind was, who got hit,” said 2nd Lt. Thomas Doherty, platoon leader, F Company.

Doherty had his interpreter riding along with him so he immediately knew that it was the Iraqi Army’s 2nd Battalion executive officer, Maj. Ezzeldin, whose vehicle fell victim to the IED attack.

Instead of letting the devastation set in and do nothing to help their fellow soldiers, they were on scene first and began doing what they could.

Not only did the Iraqi soldiers do the right thing in providing security, but they also assisted the medics with whatever they needed.

“If they weren’t on a gun, they came to help us,” Doherty said.

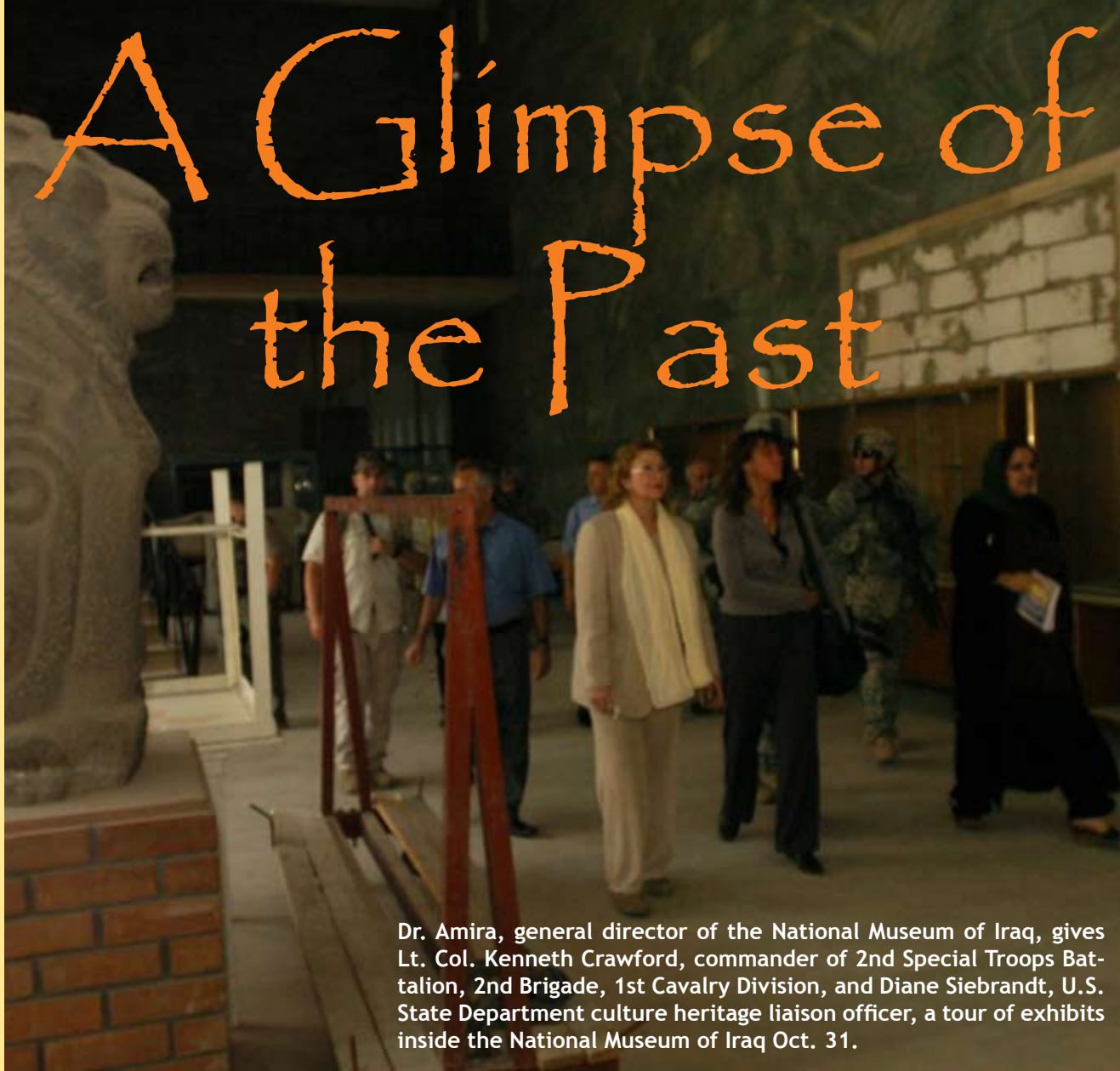
“They were very helpful with comforting the wounded,” said Howe. “They also helped by holding the IV bags and loading the wounded onto the (medical evacuation) birds.”

As the medical helicopters pulled away from the attack site, Frame escorted the wounded to a hospital on Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul.

While these Coalition troops won’t take credit for saving four lives that day, they do acknowledge that what they did made a difference.

“I can’t say they wouldn’t have made it without us,” said Doherty. “But I will say their quality of life wouldn’t have been the same.” ☎

# A Glimpse of the Past



Dr. Amira, general director of the National Museum of Iraq, gives Lt. Col. Kenneth Crawford, commander of 2nd Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, and Diane Siebrandt, U.S. State Department culture heritage liaison officer, a tour of exhibits inside the National Museum of Iraq Oct. 31.

## 1st Cavalry troops address concerns at National Museum of Iraq

Story, photos by  
Army Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim  
MND-B PAO

When what was supposed to be simply a short meeting turned into a grand tour of the National Museum of Iraq, some 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers got to see a part of early civilization that was beyond their imagination. In some cases, artifacts which dated back to more than 5,000 years ago.

Lt. Col. Kenneth Crawford, commander of 2nd "Spartan" Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, and Diane Siebrandt, a U.S. State Department culture heritage liaison officer, set up the "monumental" meeting with Dr. Amira, the museum's newly-appointed general director, Oct. 31.

"What we did was huge," said Siebrandt who

works closely with Iraq's Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities.

After a meeting with Dr. Amira and her other director generals, Crawford and a few lucky Soldiers from his personal security detail received the first tour of the museum and its exhibits since the early part of the war. The doors were closed to visitors April 23, 2003.

"I was in awe on what I saw in there," said Crawford, a San Antonio native. "I don't know. In my life — aside from the Ishtar Gate in Berlin, which was the oldest thing I've seen — this was even more special. You come here, and you're in the cradle of society."

During the Ottoman Empire, archeologists and fortune finders were granted digging permits and





Many of the artifacts inside the museum date back to the Mesopotamian era.



Amira tells Crawford about one of the museum's exhibits.

were able to keep any find. According to Siebrandt, it was during that time when most of the Mesopotamia artifacts left the country. After World War I, and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, it was a British traveler, Gertrude Bell, who started supervising many of the excavation sites and brought to light the importance of having a sense of cultural awareness. The museum, which was originally opened in the early 1900's by Bell, was known then as The Baghdad Archaeological Museum. Many of the exhibits contain artifacts once belonging to her private collection.

**T**he museum was open to the general public until 2003, when looters and vandals used the war to steal many priceless items, according to Siebrandt. Since then, the museum and its staff have closed its doors to almost everyone. So, the meeting and subsequent tour of the exhibits currently under construction was a surprising treat for the few who were able to see it.

Since December 2006, the State Department and Coalition Forces have been trying to start the dialogue that might start the process of reopening the museum

to the Iraqi people.


"We just were never able to get dialog started," said Siebrandt. "With Doctor Amira, I met with her and talked about [Lt.] Colonel Crawford (coming to the museum). It was all about getting the right person in."

***"I was in awe of what I saw in there ... you're in the cradle of society."***

***Army Lt Col. Kenneth Crawford  
2nd BTSB, 2nd Bde., 1st Cav. Div.  
commander***

For Crawford, whose unit does a lot of civic projects throughout the Karkh Security District, getting to help the museum reopen to the public is important.

"It's an icon ... not just for Karkh or Baghdad, but for Iraq," Crawford said. "This showed a big step toward joint relations. It was nice to just get our foot in the door to ID areas of the facility we can maybe help with — the end state of getting the museum open to the public."

Crawford said that there is a "plethora" of things his battalion could do to maybe help with reopening efforts. During his time in the museum, Amira and her staff addressed issues such as the water damage caused by water leaks, security, dedicated power source, and some others he and Amira planned to discuss in future meetings. 



# “NCOS ARE THE BACKBONE OF ANY ARMY”

## Senior Iraqi NCOs hold conference and competition at Camp Victory

Iraqi Army Sgt. Maj. Raed Abdul Hadi Sigar shoots an AK-47 during the marksmanship portion of a competition among Iraq's best senior NCOs at Camp Victory Nov. 24.

Story, photos by  
Marine Sgt. Darhonda Rodela  
MNC-I PAO

**S**enior NCOs of the Iraqi Army traveled from forward operating bases throughout Iraq to Camp Victory for an Iraqi Army NCO symposium at Al Faw Palace Nov. 24-26.

Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston sat in on the symposium and congratulated the NCOs of the Iraqi Army on their progress and continuing success.

Preston said the NCOs should continue to lead and build their corps.

The senior Soldiers of the Iraqi Army were able to make recommendations for the future of Iraq's Army.

"This symposium is a historical move for Iraq," said Army Com-

mand Sgt. Maj. Peter Burrowes, Iraqi Assistance Group command sergeant major. "They are able to present reports that cover missions, equipment and local training to their superiors."

During a 'break out session' in the symposium, the Iraqi Army participants were split into groups. They discussed uniforms, pay and other issues that they felt they needed to address. With an interpreter present, American forces were able to understand and take notes on the issues of the Iraqi Army.

They also made recommendations on how to move forward. At the symposium, they learned, bonded and were able to sit and talk to each other said Burrowes,

who played an important role in creating the opportunity for the Iraqi Soldiers to join on Camp Victory.

The New York City native said he was overall, impressed at the progress of the NCO corps.

"This cannot stop," he said. "The momentum that the Iraqi Army NCOs have established has to be supported. The NCO corps is the backbone of our army and of any army."

Prior to the symposium, the top 22 NCOs of the Iraqi Army were selected to participate in a competition.

"Two of their best NCOs were chosen from each division to represent their unit, which in itself was a feat," explained Burrowes.



"During the competition here, they competed to be called the best of the best."

The Iraqi soldiers traveled from multiple places in Iraq such as Tikrit, Al Asad and Fallujah.

**T**he Soldiers ran two miles, performed as many push-ups and sit-ups as they could in two minutes.

Burrowes said initially, a suggestion for the Soldiers to only run 1.5 miles was brought up, but instead, they decided to maintain a two-mile run as part of the competition.


"Some of the soldiers completed their two-mile run in 11 minutes," he said. "The thought of decreasing the distance would not have done them justice."

The Iraqi soldiers participated in a road march to the rifle range where the fired 20 rounds using

an AK-47 from approximately 30 meters onto a target. They also assembled and disassembled the AK-47 within a time limit of 90 seconds and applied tourniquets as a first aid portion of the competition.

Iraqi Army Sgt. Maj. Raed Abdul Hadi Sigar was one of a few Soldiers who scored perfect and fired all of his 20 rounds center-mass on the target.

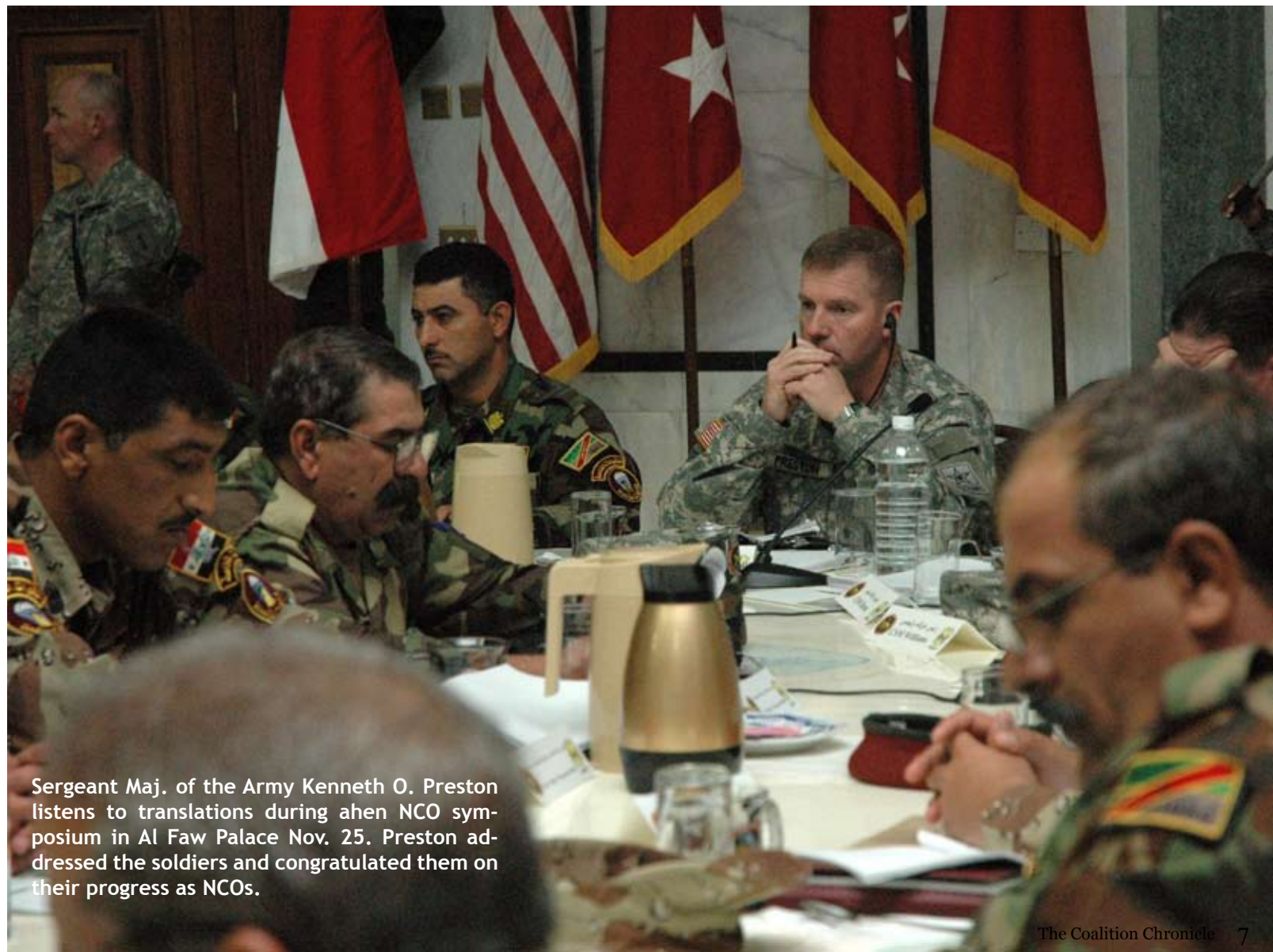
"I am very happy to be here in the competition," Sigar said. "This competition shows how much Iraqi Army soldiers are qualified."

"From this competition, I saw a level of proficiency that most people don't think exists," said Burrowes. "This is a big step. This is good being a part of such a historical event. Pick any significant moment in history and put yourself there; that's how I feel." 

## THE BEST OF THE BUNCH

The Iraqi senior NCOs competed in several events to determine the best among them, including:

- Two-mile run
- Most pushups in two minutes
- Most situps in two minutes
- Three-mile road march
- 30-meter AK-47 fire
- Assembly/disassembly of AK-47
- Proper application of a tourniquet



Sergeant Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston listens to translations during a NCO symposium in Al Faw Palace Nov. 25. Preston addressed the soldiers and congratulated them on their progress as NCOs.



**Above:** U.S. Army Spc. Jesse Crawford, Company A, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, jumps from one roof top to another during a cordon and search mission Nov. 26 in Baqubah. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jason Robertson.

**Top right:** Army Lt. Col Mark H. Landes and Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory R. Frias of 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, serve Thanksgiving turkey to their Soldiers at a combat outpost Nov. 22. Photo by Army Spc. Shawn M. Cassatt.

**Bottom right:** A Soldier with 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, teaches an Iraqi boy how to swing a baseball bat in Multaka Nov. 1. Photo by Army Spc. Laura M. Buchta.

**Bottom left:** Marines with Battery S, 5th Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, fire an Excalibur round from a howitzer at Camp Fallujah Nov. 4. Photo by Marine Master Sgt. Paul Bishop.

**Top left:** Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Louis Kost, II Marine Expeditionary Force Military Iraqi Transition Team, 1st Battalion, First Brigade, Seventh Division (3-1-7), is attacked by Bruno, a military working dog at Camp Blue Diamond Nov. 2. Photo by Marine Lance Cpl. Julian Billmaier.



# Freedom's Focal Point





# Freedom's Focal Point

Sailors with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 1 perform a radio check over a communication system prior to leaving Camp Fallujah Nov. 7. Photo by Marine Sgt. Robert B. Brown.



# Freedom's Focal Point











*Left:* Army Pvt. Samuel Glanzer, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, conducts security during a patrol along the Zaghytun Chay River 50 miles southeast of Kirkuk Nov. 20. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Samuel Bendet.

*Bottom right:* An Iraqi soldier with the Emergency Service Unit jumps from a rooftop while looking for weapon caches in Al Kahn Nov. 10. Photo by Staff Sgt. Samuel Bendet.

*Bottom middle:* Lt. Gen. Ray T. Odierno, Multi-National Corps-Iraq commanding general, along with Chief Warrant Officer Ray M. Noble, 3rd Infantry Division, G4, and Pvt. Nick Burnett, Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, 3rd Inf. Div., cut the birthday cake for the division's 90th birthday at the Marne Dining Facility at Camp Victory Nov. 21. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Carlos Lazo.

*Bottom left:* An Iraqi soldier with 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division hands out school supplies and to students in Hor al-Bosh Nov. 3. Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. William Greer.



# Freedom's Focal Point





An Iraqi soldier with the Emergency Service Unit clears a stairwell during a cordon and knock through the Village of Al Kahn during Operation Iron Hammer Nov. 11. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Samuel Bendet.

# Freedom's Focal Point







**Above:** U.S. Army Pfc. Josh Smith and other Soldiers with 2nd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, input hopeful candidates' information, including retinal scans and fingerprints, into a governmenta database, during a Iraqi Security Forces recruitment drive at Coalition Outpost Blackfoot Nov. 12. Photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class David Quillen.

**Top left:** A Marine with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 773 runs from an AH-1W Super Cobra after arming it for a medical evacuation mission from Al Asad Air Base Nov. 5. Photo by Marine Cpl. Sheila M. Brooks.

**Top right:** Army Sgt. 1st. Class Cory West, Company B, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, leads a patrol of concerned local citizens across a canal in Al Ja'ara Nov. 21. Photo by Army Sgt. Timothy Kingston.

**Right:** Marine Cpl. Timothy Korn, Transportation Support Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 2nd Marine Logistics Group waits at Haditha Dam as an M1A1 Abrams tank exits Nov. 4. Photo by Marine Cpl. Manuel Robert.



# Freedom's Focal Point









Lt. Akael of 2nd Battalion, 5th Iraqi Army Brigade, hands out school supplies at the Thekhar Primary School in the Hateem neighborhood of Baghdad Nov. 12. Photo by Army Spc. Charles W. Gill.





# A New Age in Troop Protection

Mine Resistant  
Ambush Protected  
vehicles roll  
into theater

Story, photos by  
Army Sgt. Mark B. Matthews  
MND-B PAO

Pfc. Peter Medina, an infantryman with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, sits high in the turret of a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle during a training course at Camp Liberty Oct 30.





The first shipments of Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles arrived at Camp Liberty in western Baghdad and are being fielded to units that operate in areas with the highest threat levels. About 7,000 MRAPs are expected in theater by summer.

**T**owering high overhead and aligned one after the other in a seemingly endless row, the next generation of combat vehicles roll into Iraq.

The new Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle is currently being fielded here for the first time anywhere, and Soldiers are getting their first hands-on look at the latest development in troop protection.

"I'm really impressed by the vehicle, mainly because of the height, and the fact that it can drive about 20 to 30 degrees on its side without rolling over," said Brooklyn, N.Y., native, Spc. Marquis Dawkins, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. "It is also much more comfortable. The makers of the MRAP were definitely thinking about the Soldiers."

The MRAPs come in two categories. Category one holds up to six Soldiers and will replace the humvee. Category two is a longer version, which can hold a crew of 10 Soldiers. Both vehicles, although different, bring the same ideas of troop protection to the fight.

"The vehicle has an angled bottom shell on it so it can deflect blasts a lot," said Colorado Springs, Colo., native, Pfc. Nicholas Lane, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division. "Hopefully, it will keep us safer out there."

Prior to the vehicles being handed over to the units for day-to-day use, the Soldiers are given extensive training on how to operate, drive and maintain the vehicles. This training also introduces Soldiers to

some new luxuries the humvee lacked, like pneumatic doors and suspended seats.

"Throughout this week we are learning how to work on the trucks, and we're learning how to drive them," said Lane. "This is the first course, and the vehicles are still new so we're just taking it step-by-step."

This training not only familiarizes the Soldiers with the vehicles, but also gives them confidence in the

MRAPs by giving them the opportunity to drive the vehicles over steep hills and tight turns.

"I feel blessed," Dawkins said. "Knowing the capabilities of the MRAP gives me reassurance that even though I have a few more months here in Baghdad that I have a much better chance of getting home to my family."

The MRAPs were designed to be both safe and

effective for Soldiers conducting patrols, convoy security and missions throughout Iraq. As more trucks arrive in theater these trucks should play a vital role in providing security and stability to the people of Iraq.

An estimated 7,000 MRAP vehicles are scheduled to be in theater by early summer. The MRAPs are currently being fielded to units who currently need them the most and operate in areas with the highest threat. Although the humvee is not expected to be fully phased out anytime soon, the MRAPs will begin to take its place as a new standard vehicle for the Army. ☺

***"Knowing the capabilities of the MRAP gives me reassurance ... that I have a much better chance of getting home."***

***Army Spc. Marquis Dawkins  
HHC, 4th Bde., 1st Inf. Div.***





Sgt. Alex Lapinsky, a military police specialist with the 153rd Military Police Company, Delaware City, Del., twists a prop knife on Jacob Potts, a fellow MP, during a self-defense class for concerned local citizens in Hawr Rajab at FOB Falcon Nov. 13.




Sgt. Bruce Ashby observes his students during a cardiopulmonary resuscitation class



Spc. Jacqueline E. Holding, a combat medic, explains procedure for opening a casualty's airway to concerned local citizens





# Prepared to Protect

## *Delaware MPs train concerned local citizens in Hawr Rajab*

Story, photos by  
Army Sgt. Luis Delgadillo  
MND-C PAO

Soldiers assigned to 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, trained concerned local citizens to be better protectors of their communities at Forward Operating Base Falcon Nov. 13 and 14.

Military police and a combat medic of the 153rd Military Police Company, Delaware National Guard, assigned to 2nd Brigade, gave the group of 30 CLCs classes on first aid, human rights, self defense, weapons handling and fixed site security among other classes.

As is normal for training events involving concerned citizens, in between classes a soccer ball was produced and both groups, instructors and students, began a pick-up game of soccer.

The two-day training helped keep CLCs up to speed on their skills as the first line of defense for their communities against insurgents and it gave them a head start on training they would receive in an Iraqi Police Academy.

The training provided by the MPs also helped bring the CLCs one step closer to being accepted as recruits for the Iraqi Police Academy.

Though there was much information to be absorbed for only two days of training, Soldiers of the 153rd MP Co. hoped that the CLCs internalized some key concepts.

"I'm hoping they picked up the fact that

when they're setting up security for a position somewhere that's going to be long term, they have to think like the enemy," said Staff Sgt. John W. Case III, an MP with the 153rd MP Co.

Case said when volunteers begin to set up their checkpoints they must try and look for weak points the enemy might exploit and then reinforce them.

***"I look at this as the only way I'm not going to be back here in four years."***


***Staff Sgt. John W. Case III  
military policeman***

Along with the training in law enforcement that the Soldiers of the Delaware National Guard received from the Army, many bring with them decades of experience in law enforcement through civilian careers.


Case said that by motivating the CLCs to care for their communities they had a better chance at surviving their own neighborhoods and one day attend the Iraqi Police Academy.

"I look at this as the only way that I'm not going to be back here in four years," he said.

A concerned citizen at the training said that the training was beneficial and would serve them well as they worked to protect their communities and families.

Though no Iraqi police recruitment drive is planned for the immediate future, different groups of Hawr Rajab CLCs will be attending the training throughout the week said Spc. David Stevens, a military police specialist with the 153rd MP Co. 

ut of the hand of Spc.



oper techniques for  
during a class.

# A COALITION OF ITS OWN

Diverse Georgian battalion defends Diyala Bridge and the troops who cross it

Story, photos by  
Army Spc. Beatrice Florescu  
MNC-I PAO

**T**he dust settles in the distant sunset as soldiers take their positions on the Diyala Bridge for another shift of the 31st Georgian Battalion's tour of guard duty. For the next 12 hours, they will guard and ensure that transportation safely flows on this route.

Soldiers guard the bridge and intervene whenever needed to aid and assist the convoys encountering difficulties, while passing through the area. This is how Georgian Soldiers have also become friends with U.S. troops.

"I like being on the tower and being friends with U.S. Soldiers," said Cpl. Zurashvili Rezo. "We participate together in briefings, formations and start our shift relying on each other. I like that the rules of engagement are also in Georgian language and that helps us a lot."

A .50-caliber machine gunner, Zurashvili is happy to have trained and learned how to use both Georgian and U.S. weapons, he

said. There is also an expressions' exchange ongoing between them, each other trying to learn a few phrases in the respective languages to communicate better.

There are differences between the two bridges guarded by the Georgian troops in the Diyala province. The Diyala bridge is more active, while the Asidiyah seems to quiet down in time.

"The Asidiyah bridge is quieter on the side of the Shiite population," said 1st Lt. Nakani Paata, platoon leader in charge of 12-hour shifts on the Diyala bridge. "There are very few Sunni, maybe two or three villages. They usually shoot at our troops and the U.S. troops."

The Georgian and U.S. troops work well together. Every unit comes through this bridge is very kind, Paata said. The Georgian component is comprised of all volunteers of different backgrounds and ethnicities, among Croats, Muslims and Serbs. A strong team spirit bonds them and they celebrate all the holidays together



Georgian Army Sgt. Besic Kopanadze stands ready in the gunner's seat on the first humvee at the entrance on the Diyala Bridge.









Georgian Army Cpl. David Kopaliani monitors movement of any vehicle prior to entering the Diyala bridge area for 12 hours every day, ensuring safety and security of all passing traffic.

maintaining unit integrity and cohesion.

"When we came from Georgia the accommodations here on the bridge security check point were very poor," Paata said. "But we rebuilt the rooms and we made things ourselves with our bare hands."


The Georgian troops moved to Camp Delta when the main body of the brigade arrived, said Maj.

Kobaidze Kakha, battalion commander. He was also content that the command of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, gave a positive review for the Georgian troops.

"We are trained in skills in Georgia and Kuwait for different tasks that we are dealing now with the bridges

and bases we guard," Kakha said. "There are no big differences between the Georgian Soldiers

and the U. S. Soldiers, except that U.S. Soldiers are more practically experienced, since some of them are here on a second or third tour, and have been better exposed than Georgian Soldiers who are here for the first time."

Georgian Soldiers work hard and their dedication and commitment has earned them multiple awards during their rotation in the Operation Iraqi Freedom. Soldiers of the 31st Georgian Battalion have been awarded 75 Army Commendation Medal awards, were presented 25 ARCOMs, and the leadership was presented with one Bronze Star Medal for the battalion commander and two for the company commanders. 

***"We rebuilt the rooms and we made things ourselves with our bare hands."***

***Georgian 1st Lt. Nakani Paata  
platoon leader***





Spc. Benjamin Bell, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, looks for the correct parts as he performs an inventory of the maintenance platoon tools, Nov. 15, at the CAB flight line.

# CAN'T FLY WITHOUT 'EM

## 3rd CAB mechanics do the dirty work to keep birds aloft

Story, photos by  
Army Pfc. Monica K. Smith  
MND-C PAO

**T**hey're not the popular guys in an aviation brigade. Not that they are disliked, they simply have jobs without much glory and often without praise. They're not pilots or crew chiefs, and they don't work on aircraft as mechanics. In fact, they don't directly deal with aviation at all — but if they were gone, you'd notice.

Such is the case with Forward Support Company E, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, comprised of generator mechanics, truck mechanics, cooks, a night vision mechanic, a welder and fuelers, just to name a few. Though not directly dealing with aircraft, Co. E's behind-the-scene responsibilities are the oil that allows the CAB's mission machine to function smoothly.

"We're a service organization," Staff Sgt. Rufus Parson said. "That's our job. We're the unnoticed people and we understand that's what we get paid to do, that's how we directly impact the mission."

The company is divided into three platoons: the maintenance platoon, distribution platoon, and the headquarters platoon.

Each platoon's responsibilities is specific to its name.

Soldiers within the maintenance platoon work to maintain ground vehicles within the battalion. The platoon primarily works on fuel trucks that carry fuel out to the aircrafts keeping day and night air missions operational, said Sgt. Reyes Maza.

The maintenance platoon also works on generators to provide power to work areas allowing Soldiers to





Sgt. Michael Bean (left) and Spc. Shan Smith, both members of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, inspect parts during an inventory.

perform their duties, and other miscellaneous non-aviation maintenance, such as air conditioning.

"We support the battalion mission internally so we don't have to go to external sources for help," Chief Warrant Officer David Ware said. "So far we've performed more than 2,000 unscheduled maintenance jobs, and more than 400 scheduled jobs. If it wasn't for maintenance, distribution platoons wouldn't be able to function at all. They all need the vehicles to transport personnel and supplies."

**T**he distribution platoon works with the actual fueling of the aircraft and ground support vehicles. Often called petroleum, oil and lubricant platoon, or POL, the majority of their work involves "cold fueling," fueling an aircraft after it has shutdown.

"The (distribution) platoon gives cold fuel to all of the Black Hawks and Chinooks of 2-3 Avn.," Lt. Michael White said. "In addition, while 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment has their fuelers at other (Forward Operating Bases), the (2-3 Avn.) POL takes care of all



Members of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment's maintenance platoon, conduct an inventory of their tools.

the Apaches in 1-3 Avn. During their time in theater, the POL platoon has fueled 1.5 million gallons of cold fuel."

The headquarters platoon deals with the administrative portion of the company. This platoon handles all personnel and logistics. They also take care of all other duties needed by the battalion including getting ice, and runs for muffins, pop-tarts and drinks.

"We make everything run," Sgt. Natalie Campbell said. "Without us, there is no mission."

All three platoons work toward furthering the mission. The company allocates Soldiers to fix the trucks that carry fuel to an awaiting aircraft that will fly, fight and gather the fame.

But these Soldiers say they don't mind. They don't need praise to understand the importance of their existence.

"The birds come first naturally, but everybody has a slice of the work," Sgt. Jerry Billings said. "If everyone doesn't do their part of the overall mission, it isn't going to be successful." ©

***"If it wasn't for maintenance, distribution platoons wouldn't be able to function at all."***

***Marine Capt. Geoffrey Cole  
assistant team chief***



# IN MEMORIAM

NAMES OF COALITION SERVICE MEMBERS WHO DIED WHILE SERVING IN  
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM BETWEEN OCTOBER 16 AND NOVEMBER 15, 2007

## **October 16, 2007**

Spc. Michael D. Brown, 20  
*1/1 Avn., 1st CAB, 1st Inf. Div.*

## **October 17, 2007**

Spc. Vincent A. Madero, 22  
*2/82 FA, 3rd Bde, 1st Cav. Div.*

## **October 18, 2007**

Staff Sgt. Jared S. Fontenot, 35  
*2/12 Inf., 2nd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.*  
Spc. Wayne M. Geiger, 23  
*3/2 Stryker Cav. Regt.*

## **October 19, 2007**

Cpl. Erik T. Garoutte, 22  
*1st FAST Co., MCSF Bn., 2nd MEF*

## **October 24, 2007**

Staff Sgt. Robin L. Towns Sr., 52  
*372nd MP Bn., D.C. Natl. Guard*

## **October 25, 2007**

Pfc. Adam J. Chitjian, 39  
*3/8 Cav., 3rd Bde., 1st Cav. Div.*

## **October 26, 2007**

Spc. David E. Lambert, 39  
*276th Eng. Bn., 91st TC,  
Va. Natl. Guard*

## **October 30, 2007**

Pvt. Cody M. Carver, 19  
*1/15 Inf., 3rd Bde., 3rd Inf. Div.*  
Pfc. Rush M. Jenkins, 22  
*1/15 Inf., 3rd Bde., 3rd Inf. Div.*  
Sgt. Daniel L. McCall, 24  
*1/15 Inf., 3rd Bde., 3rd Inf. Div.*

## **October 31, 2007**

Sgt. Louis A. Griese, 30  
*2/327 Inf., 1st Bde.,  
101st Airborne Div.*  
Capt. Timothy I. McGovern, 28  
*2/7 Cav., 4th Bde., 1st Cav. Div.*

**GREATER LOVE  
HATH NO MAN  
THAN THIS:  
THAT A MAN  
LAY DOWN HIS  
LIFE FOR HIS  
FRIENDS.  
*JOHN 15:13***

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Spc. Brandon W. Smitherman, 21  
*2/7 Cav., 4th Bde., 1st Cav. Div.*

## **November 1, 2007**

2nd Lt. Tracy Lynn Alger, 30  
*3/187 Inf., 3rd Bde.,  
101st Airborne Div.*  
Master Sgt. Thomas A. Crowell, 36  
*Det. 301,  
AF Office of Special Investigations*  
Staff Sgt. David A. Wieger, 28  
*Det. 303,  
AF Office of Special Investigations*

## **November 2, 2007**

Cpl. Andrzej Filipek, 31  
*3rd Mech. Bde., Poland*

## **November 3, 2007**

Pfc. Dwayne A. Covert Jr., 20  
*13th CSSB, 3rd Inf. Div.*

## **November 5, 2007**

Petty Officer 2nd Class  
Kevin R. Bewley, 27  
*EOD MU 11, EOD Group 1*  
Staff Sgt. Carletta S. Davis, 34  
*1st BSB, 1st Bed., 10th Mountain Div.*  
Staff Sgt. John D. Linde, 30  
*1st BSB, 1st Bed., 10th Mountain Div.*  
Pfc. Adam J. Muller, 21  
*1st BSB, 1st Bed., 10th Mountain Div.*

Sgt. Daniel J. Shaw, 23  
*1/9 Inf., 2nd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.*

Sgt. Derek T. Stenroos, 24  
*1st BSB, 1st Bed., 10th Mountain Div.*

## **November 6, 2007**

Spc. Christine M. Ndururi, 21  
*4/3 Armored Cav. Regt.*

## **November 7, 2007**

Capt. Benjamin Tiffner, 31  
*1/5 SF Group*  
Sgt. Lui Tumanuvao, 29  
*1/30 Inf., 2nd Bde., 3rd Inf. Div.*

## **November 9, 2007**

Spc. Jermaine D. Franklin, 22  
*1/32 Cav., 1st Bde.,  
101st Airborne Div.*

## **November 12, 2007**

Spc. Ashley Sietsema, 20  
*108th Med. Bn., 108th SB,  
Ill. Natl. Guard*  
Sg. Joseph M. Vanek, 22  
*2/325 PIR, 2nd Bde.,  
82nd Airborne Div.*

## **November 13, 2007**

Sgt. Christopher R. Kruse, 23  
*2/23 Inf., 4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.*  
Pfc. Casey P. Mason, 22  
*8th MP Bde., 8th TSC*  
Cpl. Peter W. Schmidt, 30  
*2/23 Inf., 4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.*

## **November 14, 2007**

Spc. Derek R. Banks, 24  
*276th Eng. Bn., 91st TC,  
Va. Natl. Guard*  
Sgt. Kenneth R. Booker, 25  
*2/23 Inf., 4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.*  
2nd Lt. Peter H. Burks, 26  
*4/2 Stryker Cav. Regt.*

