



We're here ...



Beacon's Light

Editor's Pen

We made it. I think that headline sums up the first 30 days of this deployment.

The Brigade is spread across a wide spectrum this time around. We have Soldiers strewn from downtown Baghdad to Mosul.

Getting to each battalion and squadron is going to be tough, but that's my goal. I want a Striker journalist covering Striker Soldiers as much as possible.

I know that's not always going to be the case. I will need your help in accomplishing this. I know there are Soldiers out there who are handy with a camera and even know how to type a few words as well. I've heard you tapping away at the MWR Internet shops.

Take pictures of your unit, write an article about what you've done and then send it to me at the e-mail address below. If you have any questions about this, please contact me and I will help you the best I can.

As always, thanks for reading,
Sgt. Zach Mott
3rd BCT Public Affairs NCOIC
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Safety, even in a combat zone, remains a paramount concern.

Page 4



Soldiers celebrated the holiday season by joining together to sing seasonal songs readings from the Bible.

Page 5



Striker 6 talked to Soldiers on Camp Taji about living conditions as well as the mission ahead.

Page 7



Silver Lions are prepping vehicles, equipment and personnel before beginning operations in Iraq.

Page 9

On the cover

A Humvee from Company C, 64th Brigade Support Battalion is off loaded from the U.S.S. Honor, a cargo ship based out of Wilmington, Del., at the port in Kuwait. The equipment was shipped to the Middle East for use by the 3rd Brigade Combat Team during Operation Iraqi Freedom 07-09.

Photo by Sgt. Zach Mott



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3rd BCT Public Affairs NCOIC
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Spc. Michael Cox

HORT REPORT

Soldiers, Families and Friends of the Striker Brigade,

Happy New Year! I know that muse seem a little ironic and many may be feeling a little humbug this time of year with our Soldiers off in a far off land and the families left at home alone. But there are blessings to be count and great things to look forward to this year.

I for one am thankful to be here during this historic period for Iraq and our nation's war on terror. We are in a position now more than ever to finally seal the deal in Iraq so that our Soldiers and brothers and sisters across the Army won't have to return to Iraq after us. Iraq really is a different place than a year ago ... different in a good way. Attacks remain down and Iraqis are taking more and more responsibility for their own destiny every day. The average Iraqi citizen is saying, "we've had enough" leaving Al Qaeda and the insurgency to fight for their own survival.

We will soon take responsibility for the Istaqlal district of Baghdad, north of the main city. Soon after that we will assume control of Adhimyah and in March, Sadr City as surge units begin to withdraw. Our larger area of operations is indicative of the progress being made here and holds great promise for the months to come.

Of course by now everyone is probably aware that the brigade is fragmented, and current living and working conditions for some of us are not making the adjustment any easier. But

improvements are being made every day. For those of us at Camp Striker on Taji, we are particularly feeling the stress of open bay quarters, frequent lack of hot water and a virtual clean slate for office and work space, but CSM Dailey and I will not rest until necessary improvements are made to bring 3rd BCT's footprint up to the standards of the other brigades in theater.

In the short time we've been here, we've managed to enlarge the MWR facility, add new gym equipment and an AFN TV area. We've added phones for Soldiers to call home and computers with internet for them to stay in touch via e-mail. We've had new, larger water heaters and hot water tanks installed in the shower facilities, and we have containerized housing units on the way to afford our Soldiers more room and at least a margin of privacy.

1-68 Armor, 64th BSB and the 3rd STB are all co-located on Taji, 1-68 Soldiers will soon be moving out to command outpost and joint security stations in the Istaqlal district though they will still have frequent access to the amenities on Taji. Similarly, 1-8 Infantry was diverted to Mosul soon after we arrived in theater. They too will be occupying COPs and JSSs to more easily project our forces into the communities to continue the progress made in Iraq and reach our goal of irreversible momentum, putting Iraqis in the lead. 4-10 Cavalry and 3-29 Field Artillery are closer to central

Baghdad in Forward Operating Bases Liberty and Prosperity, respectively.

Though it is unfortunate for us as a team to be fragmented this way, it's easy to see that the Striker Brigade influence is being felt all over Iraq and will have an impact on the success of this theater. Fortunately, we will have them back together in the not so distant future for continued operations.

I know many of our Soldiers and Families have suffered through multiple deployments, and this time of year only makes separation that much more difficult. CSM Dailey and I consider that fact with every decision we make and we consider the health and welfare of the Striker Brigade as a top priority. Critical to our success is the support and confidence of our Families and the dedication of our Soldiers to the Mission and the Team.

Strikers, remember your training. Families and Friends, thank you for your support.

God bless and may this new year be a happy one for you all, for our nation and Iraq.

STRIKERS!

**Steadfast and Loyal,
John H. Hort
COL, IN
Commanding**



Can't find the *Striker Beacon*? Try looking at the following places:
www.dvidshub.net

To view the *Beacon*, and other Striker Brigade related content, you must create

a log on (anyone is eligible) and click on publications, scroll down to "Striker Beacon" (it's in alphabetical order) and download a PDF version of the paper.

www.hood.army.mil/4ID/index.html

Information on the 4th ID and 3rd BCT is located in the news section.

www.armyfrg.org

Use your log on infor-

mation obtained at the deployment fair or register for the 3rd BCT, 4th ID FRG and view all the latest information available on the Striker Brigade as well as events available locally.

SAFETY FIRST ... SAFETY ALWAYS

by Sgt. Zach Mott

3rd Brigade Combat Team
Public Affairs NCOIC

During training in Kuwait, there was a three-vehicle accident that resulted in more than \$8,000 in damage.

While returning to Camp Beuhring from the range, three Bradley Fighting Vehicles were involved in an accident that was caused by improper speed for the conditions, following too closely and Soldier error.

A dust storm developed that limited sight. The first vehicle slowed and was clipped by the second. With visibility diminished, the third vehicle was unable to maneuver around the first,

now stopped, vehicle. It slammed into the rear, right end of the Bradley that caused the track to break away from the vehicle.

As we step up operations in theater, safety must remain at the forefront of operations. Whether conducting early morning missions or late-evening operations, risk must be taken into account and steps must be taken to mitigate them.

In this region, Soldiers also need to remain cognizant of water safety and what to do in the event of a rollover.

Always remember Flat Ass Rule #1: *Make security and safety your first priority.*



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Dodson

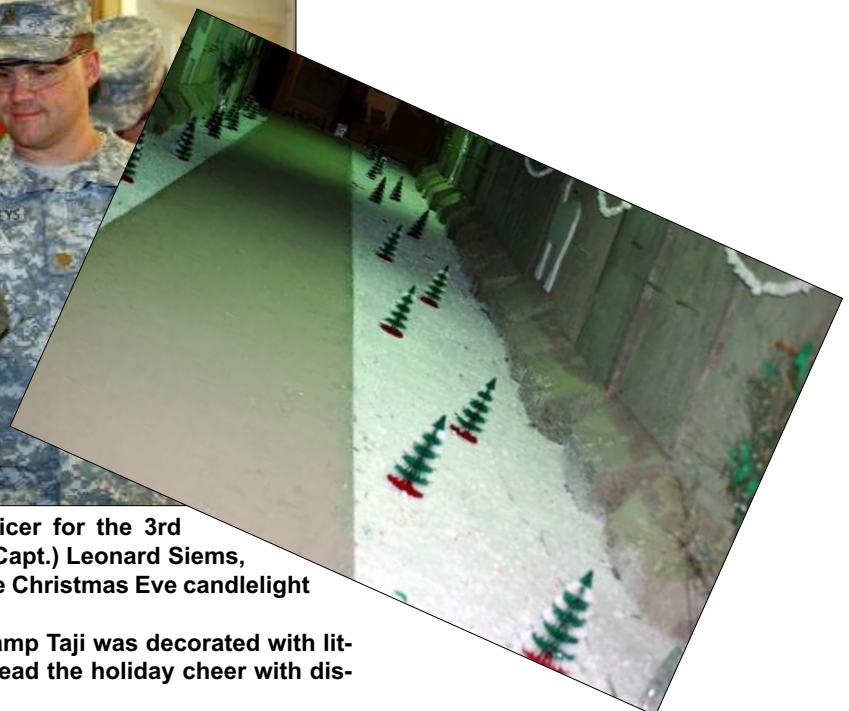
The aftermath of a three Bradley Fighting Vehicle accident left this track broken and in desperate need of repair. Improper speed for the conditions, following too closely and Soldier error were cited as causes of this accident.



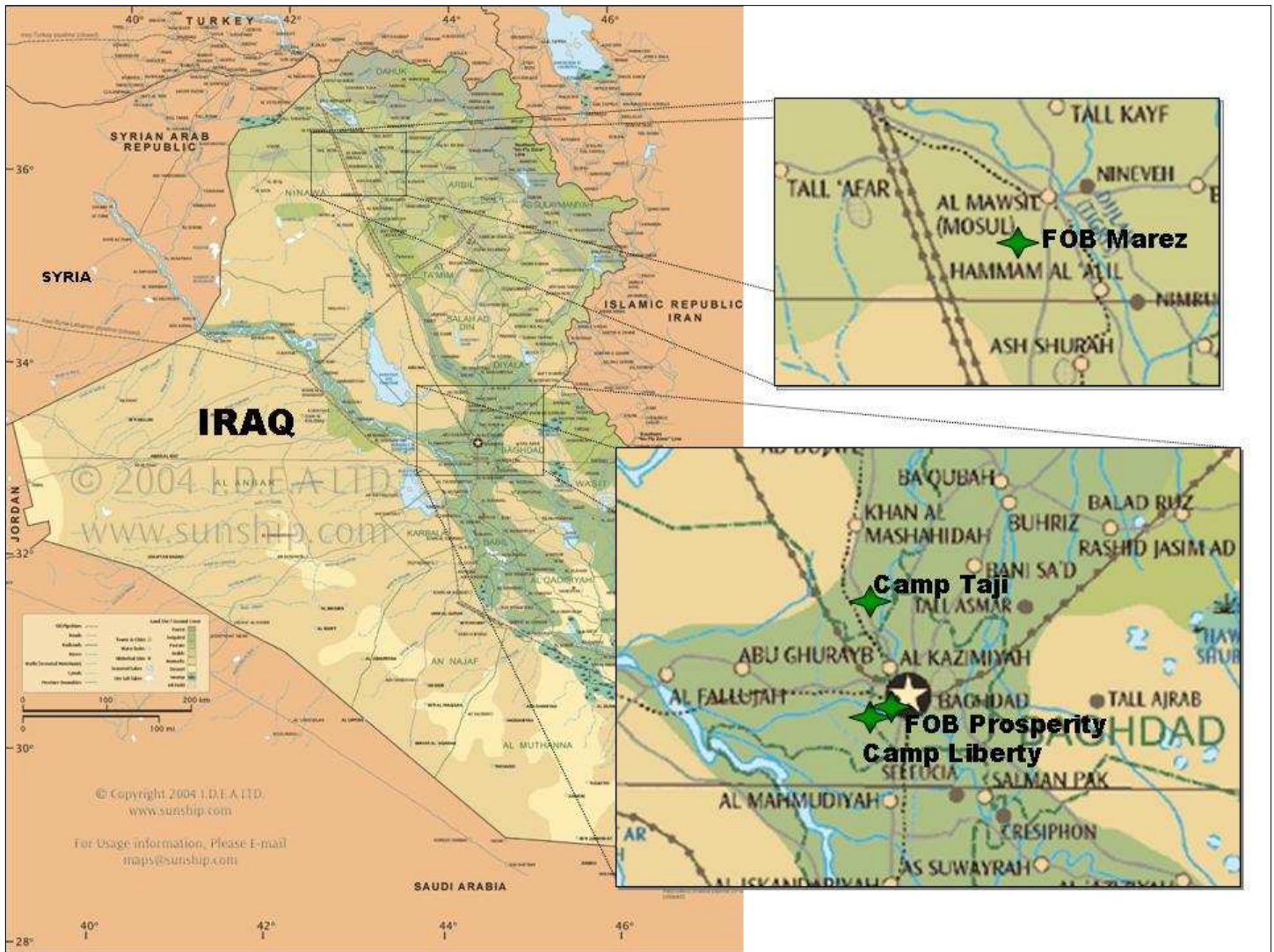


Above, Maj. Michael Humphreys, public affairs officer for the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, has his candle lit by Chap. (Capt.) Leonard Siems, chaplain for the 1-68 Combined Arms Battalion, at the Christmas Eve candlelight service at the dining facility on North Camp Taji.

Right, the entrance to the dining facility on North Camp Taji was decorated with little trees and "snow." The DFAC workers helped spread the holiday cheer with displays like this throughout the facility.



Photos by Sgt. Zach Mott
Chap. (Maj.) Chip Nicholas, 3rd Brigade Combat Team chaplain, leads a group of Soldiers in song at the dining facility on North Camp Taji December 24. The group gathered to celebrate the holiday season.



What a long strange trip it's been

3rd Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs Office Release

Since Thanksgiving, the Strikers of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division have:

Deployed more than 3,200 Soldiers and their gear on 17 commercial airplanes more than 15,000 miles to Kuwait and Iraq.

Moved more than 15,000 short tons of equipment from the motor pools and rail yards of Fort Carson over sea to the port of Kuwait and finally over roads to its final destination in Iraq.

Occupied Camp Taji, north of Baghdad, Camp Liberty and Forward Operating Base Prosperity in central Baghdad, and FOB Marez in Mosul.

Assumed responsibility for the
Istaqlal District of the Baghdad
Province, north of central Baghdad.

In Istaqlal, the Striker Brigade is partnering with Iraqi Security Forces and District Leaders to continue to improve the security situation in Baghdad while fostering local government by assisting in the development of essential services and creating eco-

nomic opportunities.

The Blackjacks of 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry are supporting the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, from Camp Liberty in central Baghdad, and the Fighting Eagles of 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment are with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment at Forward Operating Base Marez near Mosul. Finally, the Pacesetters of 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery are conducting security operations for the Joint Area Support Group at FOB Prosperity.

Merry Christmas

Col. John H. Hort, commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, is surrounded by Soldiers of the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor during a Christmas Day speech in which is talked about upcoming improvements in living conditions as well as the need to remain positive in this decisive part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Hort also address other members of the Striker Brigade that day and echoed those same statements as well.

This is the third deployment for the 3rd BCT to Iraq.



Photo by Sgt. Zach Mott

We want mail

Following are the addresses for Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team currently stationed in Iraq. The addresses are divided by unit. This information is also available via the 3rd BCT virtual Family Readiness Group at www.armyfrg.org

4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry

Soldier's Name
Troop X, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry
FOB Prosperity
APO AE 09348

1st Combined Arms Battalion, 8th Infantry

Soldier's Name
Company X, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry
Unit #43179
APO AE 09334

1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor

Soldier's Name
Company X, 1st Battalion, 68th Armor
Unit # 6065
APO AE 09378
-- Company A, 1-68 is included with 3-29 FA at
FOB Prosperity

3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery

Soldier's Name
Battery X, 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery
FOB Prosperity, Iraq
APO AE 09348

64th Brigade Support Battalion

Soldier's Name
Company X, 64th BSB, 3BCT, 4ID
Unit #6068
APO AE 09378

3rd Special Troops Battalion

Soldier's Name
Company X, 3rd Special Troops Battalion
Unit #XXXX
APO AE 09378

HHT, 3rd Brigade Combat Team

Soldier's Name
HHT, 3rd BCT, 4th ID
Unit #6064
Camp Taji, Iraq
APO AE 09378

* Where it states Troop X, Company X or Battery X, you must place the troop/company/battery of your Soldier in that space.



MPS

TO:

**POSTCARDS
FROM THE
EDGE**

To use your postcard, print this page, cut along the dotted edges, fold the paper in half and adhere the two inside halves together.

Write your note and complete the "To:" section of the postcard. Place the completed postcard in your local mailbox and that's it.

Newlyweds reunite in Iraq

by Pfc. April Campbell

27th Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Iraq

might be the last place Soldiers expect to spend quality time with loved ones during the holidays. Two Soldiers here, however, will spend their first Christmas together as a married couple while deployed to Baghdad.

Making the most of every moment they have together is nothing new to newlyweds, 1st Lt. Tabitha Hernandez, the battalion personnel officer with the 1st Battalion 64th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and 1st Lt. Francisco Hernandez, a rifle platoon leader with Company B, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division out of Fort Carson, Colo., who said they have spent most of their relationship living in separate cities.

“This is my first Christmas being married. Being able to spend it with my husband is immensely important to me because it is such a family holiday and both of us are very, very big on family,” said Tabitha, a Wellsville, N.Y., native.

Tabitha and Francisco said they met in Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Ga., in March 2006, and they began dating about a year ago when she arrived at Fort Stewart, Ga., after completing the Transportation Officer Basic Course at Fort Eustis, Va. At that time, Francisco was scheduled to go to Fort Stewart as well.

“At the beginning of the year (2007), I found out I was going to Colorado instead of Fort Stewart,” said Francisco, a Montrose, Colo., native.

In May, shortly after Tabitha arrived at Camp Liberty to begin her deployment, Francisco proposed.

“He proposed over the phone via a

care package,” said Tabitha.

The long-distance proposal took some coordination on Francisco’s part.

“I got a box ready and I sent her a letter saying, ‘when you get the box, call me and you can open it and I’ll tell you about everything inside,’” Francisco said.

The two celebrated their wedding with their families at the base of Pikes Peak, during Tabitha’s environmental morale leave in November, said Tabitha.

Although they were married, the challenges of being separated by distance were not over for Tabitha and Francisco.

Because Francisco’s unit was originally expected to be deployed to Camp Liberty, the couple parted in November expecting to see each other in December, Francisco said.

Shortly before arriving in Baghdad, however, the plans for Francisco’s unit changed, and the two found out they might not be located at the same place in Iraq. Francisco’s unit will no longer be staying at Camp Liberty.

“When he called me, the night he found out his unit was not going to be here,” she said, “one of the comments I made was ‘Well, when we said ‘I do,’ we knew that it might be this way.’”

Tabitha said she knew Francisco would be staying in Camp Liberty at least one night, but she did not know



Photo by Pfc. April Campbell

1st Lt. Francisco Hernandez, a rifle platoon leader with 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, and his wife, 1st Lt. Tabitha Hernandez, battalion personnel officer with 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, spend time together. The couple, who married in Colorado Springs, Colo., during Tabitha’s environmental morale leave in November, were at Camp Liberty together for just enough time to spend their first Christmas as a married couple together.

how long she would be able to see him. The night he arrived at Camp Liberty, the two figured out they would have Christmas together.

“It’ll be special just being able to see her for our first Christmas being married,” said Francisco. “We’ve got a little tree that we’ll stack up with small Christmas gifts that will be worth more than any other gift you could possibly get during the Christmas holidays, just simply because of where we are and what we’re doing here.”

While many Soldiers may look to their comrades for support as part of their Army family, the Hernandez couple seems to be especially blessed this holiday season in Iraq.

Silver Lions are ready to run

by Sgt. Zach Mott

3rd Brigade Combat Team

Public Affairs NCOIC

Silver Lions from the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment continue to prep their vehicles and personnel for operations in Iraq.

The battalion, which is part of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, began deploying from Fort Carson, Colo., in November to this river valley region of Iraq that is northwest of Baghdad.

This is the third Operation Iraqi Freedom deployment for the Silver Lions. The first rotation, during OIF I, was from March 2003 to March 2004, the battalions second deployment to the region was from November 2005 to November 2006.

Staff Sgt. Karl Christian, a squad leader from Company A, 1st CAB, 68th AR, is on his third deployment to Iraq with the Striker Brigade and says he's looking forward to beginning operations.

"We're ready," the Richmond, Calif., native said. "We've been training. All year we've been training, training, training; going to ranges, shoot houses, (close-quarters marksmanship) type stuff. I think we're at the level where it's time to react. We're past the crawl, walk state; it's time to run."

To prepare for the missions ahead, Christian, as well as other members of the Silver Lion Battalion, are ensuring their vehicles are properly loaded with the necessary equipment, each Soldier's gear is functioning and that everyone knows the mission ahead.

Christian is an example of the experience that exists within the Striker Brigade, where more than 70 percent have deployed at least once before in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Photo by Sgt. Zach Mott

Staff Sgt. Rogelio Rubio, left, a section leader from Calexico, Calif., and Sgt. Raymond Collazo, a gunner from Brooklyn, N.Y., both from Company A, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, load ammunition in preparation to beginning operations in Iraq.

However, there are also others, including those Christian must now lead, that are experiencing Iraq and combat for the first time.

Many of these first timers watched the initial invasion of Iraq — which the 3rd BCT was part of — on television and have heard countless stories about what life is like here; some true, some slightly embellished.

Pfc. Christopher Reynolds, a team leader with Company A, 1st CAB, 68th AR, has been with the Silver Lions since shortly after the battalion returned from Iraq in November 2006. In that time he has been able to lean heavily on the experienced Soldiers and noncommissioned officers of his company to prepare to come to Iraq.

"We've prepared, we've trained. We trained the whole year for this moment right here," the 20-year old Jacksonville, Fla., native said.



Pfc. Christopher Reynolds, a team leader with Company A, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, ties down equipment inside his Humvee in preparation for operations in Iraq.

2007 flames out; 2008 rocks on

by Sgt. Zach Mott

3rd BCT Public Affairs NCOIC

2007 was a year of change for the Striker Brigade. The year began with many enjoying the spoils of 30 days leave after a year in Iraq.

Ironically, the year ended with many of those same Soldiers who enjoyed that leave back in Iraq again.

At Camp Taji, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team Soldiers pushed 2007 out the door and ushered in 2008 in many way. Some chose to run into the new year, others enjoyed a relaxing evening by the fire and still others took part in ball drop, Army-style on the main camp.

2008 promises to be an adventurous year and Striker Soldiers are more than ready to take on what ever may come their way.



Photos by Sgt. Zach Mott

Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team take to the streets of Camp Taji for a 5-kilometer run to usher in 2008. The fun run was sponsored by the 3rd Special Troops Battalion.

Background: Staff Sgt. Matthew Weddle, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd BCT, is illuminated by the fire lit in celebration of the coming year on Camp Taji.



Staff Sgt. Matthew Weddle, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, tunes his guitar prior to entertaining the crowd at a bon fire to help celebrate the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008.

Commentary by Chap. (Capt.) Phillip Rittermeyer
64th Brigade Support Battalion

New Year, New Growth

As we enter 2008, we do so in a very unique environment. We do so in a combat zone. With the obvious stated and out of the way, I want to explore the possibilities open to one who is in this very unique situation.

There is a theory that those exposed to traumatic events over a period of time, say those deployed, have the ability to grow from that experience. Experts call this Post Traumatic Growth, the rest of us know it as, "if it doesn't kill you, it makes you stronger."

With the start of the New Year, many people make resolutions to better themselves. Here in this environment

we have the ability to make those resolutions stick by virtue of having fewer distractions. This opportunity to bet-

ter yourself might include things like quitting smoking (or starting, although I do not recommend it), catching up on your reading, learning a foreign language, getting promoted and the list goes on. I want to encourage you to utilize all the resources available to you to insure that you go home

improved in some way. Morale Welfare and Recreation, AKO and your Chaplain, to name a few, are all very helpful places to start.

So make the best of the New Year, the best of your deployment, and *GROW*.

Peace of Mind

Who ya got?

Strikers pick Super Bowl (who beats who) and who will win the BCS title (LSU vs. Ohio State):



Sgt. Justin Buck
HHT, 3BCT
Dallas over
Indianapolis
LSU over Ohio
State



Pvt. Oliver Dagum
3rd STB
New England over
Dallas
LSU over Ohio
State



Pfc Marcus Madden
64th BSB
New England over
Dallas
LSU over Ohio St.



Cpl. Andrea Moore
1-68 Armor
New England over
Dallas
LSU over Ohio
State



Pvt. Gary Tompkins
64th BSB
Dallas over New
England
LSU over Ohio St.



Staff Sgt. Mark Smallwood
1-68 Armor
New England over
Dallas
Ohio St. over LSU

CAPTION THIS



Photo by Sgt. Zach Mott

Welcome to a new feature of the *Striker Beacon*. The "Caption This" goes like this: I'll write some silly caption here and if you can come up with something better, while still remaining printable in a command information publication, I'll run it here in this section in the next issue. Think you're up for the challenge? Send your submissions to zachary.mott@iraq.centcom.mil.

My submission:

Maj. Gen. Jeffery W. Hammond, commanding general of Multi-National Division-Baghdad and 4th Infantry Division, rejects the offer from Col. John H. Hort, commander, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Inf. Div., for a staring contest. Instead, the top man of the Ivy Division chose a Karaoke contest of show tunes.