

# The Ivy Leaf

Established in 1917 to honor those who serve

VOL. 2, NO. 10

MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION - BAGHDAD

“STEADFAST AND LOYAL”

APRIL 28, 2008

Combat deployments  
return to 12 months  
beginning Aug. 2008

Pg. 2

Apache maintainers  
crank up maintenance

Pg. 13

**MND-B Soldiers gain  
U.S. citizenship**

Pg. 18-19



Gaming  
review:  
Rock Band

Pg. 25

## This week in the Ivy Leaf

Commentary	2
Mission	4
Photo Feature	14-15
Soldier	16
Family	21
Team	22
Sports	26



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

Sgt. Keith Fosmire, a team leader assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, takes point April 5 during a combined patrol with the 3rd Battalion, 9th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division.

## Raider Bde. Soldiers provide security, stability

**By Staff Sgt. Brent Williams**

*1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.*

BAGHDAD – The Raider Brigade Combat Team has a new ally in its mission to help the Government of Iraq and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers build upon the Doura beladiya, a predominately Sunni neighborhood located in Baghdad’s Rashid district.

The 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment “Warriors,” will be attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, next week, as part of its mission to assist the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi people.

“It is our intent to create a safe and stable living environment for the people of the Doura district,” said Lt. Col. Timothy Watson, commander of the 2-4 Inf. Regt., which is part 4th BCT, 10th Mountain Division, which is based out of Fort Polk, La.

mander of the 2-4 Inf. Regt., which is part 4th BCT, 10th Mountain Division, which is based out of Fort Polk, La.

The battalion’s current mission is to work with Iraqi Security Forces and the local district councils responsible for the community, which is home to the Doura Market, a social, cultural and economic center in southern Baghdad, explained Watson.

“This area has all the potential to flourish economically and contribute to the proud cultural heritage of the Iraqi nation,” Watson said. “Much of our time and effort has been devoted to facilitating the growth of the market complex while providing a non-intrusive yet highly effective security presence.”

**See Raiders Pg. 9**

## IA, MND-B secure checkpoints, patrol markets ensure safety of local citizens

**By Sgt. James Hunter**

*2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.*

BAGHDAD – Prior to fighting breaking out in Kadhamiyah, there were no signs of the possibility of Special Group cells targeting Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces. The biggest threat at that time appeared to be vehicle-borne improvised-explosive devices.

However, once violence began in Basra and east Baghdad, local citizens in the area began acting differently themselves. Apparently, criminal elements began spreading the word to the local Iraqis to go into their homes and not come out.

These criminals even marched in Kadhamiyah chanting, “Death to Maliki. Death to Maliki.”

Coalition Forces even received a tip March 28 that ISF checkpoints would come under attack, said 1st Lt. Sam Rosenberg, a native of Fort Myers, Fla., platoon leader for

2nd Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment. In response, three platoons pushed out into sector and took their positions to help reinforce the checkpoints – where they sat for a few hours until it was determined there would not be an attack.

“The streets were empty, but it was quiet and the (Iraqi Army) was doing what they were supposed to be doing,” said Capt. Brad Henry, a native of Andover Township, N.J., who is the commander of Co. D, 1-502nd Inf. Regt. “It was weird, but nothing was out of the ordinary.”

Once Henry got back to the base, he received another tip that 20 – 25 men were massing in Kadhamiyah. He ordered the company’s 4th Platoon to investigate the tip. As soon as the platoon came to the intersection, they were ambushed by special group criminals.

“The entire area basically blew up,” Rosenberg said.

“They called out ‘we are in contact; we are in contact.’”

Fighting broke out throughout the area. The platoon was attacked with rocket-propelled grenades and PKCs, and immediately started laying down fire on positively identified enemy combatants, said 1st Lt. Paul Brown, a native of Canfield, Ohio, who is the platoon leader for 4th Platoon. “As soon as my gunner was able to PID a guy, he just started engaging him. They did an awesome job.”

“We weren’t running from the fight,” said Henry. “We were going to secure the intersection and engage targets of opportunity.”

With Brown’s platoon under contact and decisively laying down the enemy, Rosenberg sent his platoon forward to support the Soldiers in their engagements.

**See Strike patrol Pg. 11**



# Army deployments to CENTCOM return to 12 months

## Department of the Army press release

Following President Bush's announcement April 10, and as directed by the Secretary of Defense, the U.S. Army will reduce deployment lengths from 15 months to 12 months for all active Army Soldiers deploying to the CENTCOM area of operations, starting on Aug. 1, 2008.

Today's announcement does not affect Soldiers currently deployed and those who will deploy prior to Aug. 1, 2008. Those Soldiers will complete their scheduled deployments.

"We recognize the selfless service and unwavering commitment of America's courageous Soldiers, and are profoundly grateful for the sacrifice and support by Army Families," said Army Secretary Pete Geren.

"This announcement is another step in our effort to restore balance to our Army," said Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey, Jr. "Returning to our 12-month policy-combined with the growth in our force-will allow us to gradually reduce the stress on the force and prepare for the full-range of missions."

The modified policy does not affect current dwell policies. Upon return from deployment, units will not be deployed again for at least 12 months. There may be exceptions to this policy given unforeseen circumstances.

## To Our Soldiers and Families:

April 10, President Bush announced his decision to return to twelve-month deployments in the CENTCOM theater for active Army units. The President's decision reflects the improved security situation in Iraq – one made possible by your unwavering commitment and willingness to sacrifice – as well as the recognition of the impact of extended deployments on Army Families and our readiness. Today's policy changes will help reduce that strain as we continue to grow the Army and restore balance.

The Army will reduce "Boots on the Ground" time to no more than twelve months for all active component Soldiers deploying to CENTCOM area of operations after Aug. 1, 2008. Soldiers deploying prior to Aug. 1 will complete their scheduled deployments.

The return to twelve-month deployments does not change the Army's dwell time policy. This policy is intended to give units time to properly reset and allow Soldiers, Families, and friends to reconnect.

You have chosen a most noble profession. With your Families standing with you in support, you have borne the increased stress and burden of this war for our Army and our Nation. A grateful Army and Nation thank you.

**Pete Geren**

Secretary of the Army

**George W. Casey, Jr.**

General, United States Army

Chief of Staff

**Kenneth O. Preston**

Sergeant Major of the Army

# Regenerative medicine seen as means to help wounded warriors

**By Gerry Gilmore**

Army News Service

WASHINGTON – The Defense Department launched a five-year, Army-led cooperative effort to leverage cutting-edge medical technology to develop new ways to assist servicemembers who've suffered severe, disfiguring wounds during their wartime service.

The newly established Armed Forces Institute of Regenerative Medicine, known by the acronym AFIRM, will serve as the military's operational agency for the effort, Dr. S. Ward Casscells, the assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, told reporters at a Pentagon news conference yesterday.

A key component of the initiative is to harness stem cell research and technology in finding innovative ways to use a patient's natural cellular structure to reconstruct new skin, muscles and tendons, and even ears, noses and fingers, Casscells said.

Just more than 900 U.S. servicemembers have undergone amputations of some kind due to injuries suffered in wartime service in Afghanistan or Iraq, Casscells said. Other troops have been badly burned or suffered spinal cord injuries or significant vision loss.

"Getting these people up to where they are functioning and reintegrated, employed, (and) able to help their families and be fully participating members of society" is the task at hand in which AFIRM will play a major role,

Casscells said.

AFIRM will fall under the auspices of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, based at Fort Detrick, Md., and it also will work in conjunction with U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research, in San Antonio.

The Medical Research and Materiel Command is the Army's lead medical research, development and related-material acquisition agency.

It comes under U.S. Army Medical Command, which is led by Lt. Gen. Eric B. Schoomaker, the Army's surgeon general. Schoomaker accompanied Casscells at the news conference.

"The cells that we're talking about actually exist in our bodies today," Schoomaker pointed out.

"We, even as adults, possess in our bodies small quantities of cells which have the potential, under the right kind of stimulation, to become any one of a number of different kinds of cells.

For example, Schoomaker said, the human body routinely regenerates bone marrow or liver cells.

AFIRM will have an overall budget of about \$250 million for the initial five-year period, of which about \$80 million will be provided by the Defense Department, Schoomaker said.

Other program funding will be provided by the National Institutes of Health, in Bethesda, Md., the Department of Veterans Affairs, and local public and private matching funding.

Rutgers University, in N.J.; Wake Forest University, in N.C.; and the University of Pittsburgh also will participate in the initiative.

Dr. Anthony Atala, a surgeon and director of the Institute for Regenerative Medicine at Wake Forest, also attended the news conference.

Atala's current research keys on growing new human cells and tissue.

"All the parts of your body, tissues and organs, have a natural repository of cells that are ready to replicate when an injury occurs," Atala told reporters.

Medical technicians now can select cells from human donors and, through a series of scientific processes, can "re-grow" new tissue, Atala said.

"Then, you can plant that (regenerated tissue) back into the same patient, thus avoiding rejection," Atala said.

Special techniques are being developed to employ re-grown tissue in the fabrication of new muscles and tendons, Atala observed, or for the repair/replacement of damaged or missing extremities such as noses, ears and fingers.

Continued advancement in regenerative medicine would greatly benefit those servicemembers and veterans who've been severely scarred by war, Schoomaker said.

The three-star general cited animals like salamanders that can regrow lost tails or limbs. "Why can't a mammal do the same thing?" he asked.

# The Ivy Leaf

**Multi-National Division - Baghdad**  
Public Affairs Office

**Commanding General:**  
Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond

**Div. Command Sergeant Major:**  
Command Sgt. Maj. John Gioia

**Public Affairs Officer:**  
Lt. Col. Steve Stover

**Public Affairs Chief**  
Sgt. Maj. Eric Lobsinger

**Editor:**  
Sgt. Jason Thompson

## Staff Writers:

Sgt. Michael Molinaro  
Sgt. Mark Matthews  
Sgt. Jerome Bishop  
Spc. Aaron Rosencrans  
Spc. Walter Klein  
Spc. Angel Martinez  
Spc. Elvyn Nieves  
Pfc. April Campbell  
Pfc. Samantha Schutz

## Contributing Units:

2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.  
4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.  
3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.  
1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.  
2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.  
Task Force XII  
18th MP Bde.  
2nd SCR  
35th Eng. Bde.  
1st Sustainment Bde.

The **Ivy Leaf** is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army. Contents of The **Ivy Leaf** are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of the Army, or the 4th Infantry Division.

The **Ivy Leaf** has a circulation of 10,000. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the Department of the Army, the 4th Infantry Division, or The **Ivy Leaf**, of the products and services advertised.

All editorial content of The **Ivy Leaf** is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs Office.

## Do you have a story to share?

The **Ivy Leaf** welcomes columns, commentaries, articles, letters and photos from readers.

Submissions should be sent to the Editor at [jason.thompson21@us.army.mil](mailto:jason.thompson21@us.army.mil) or the operations NCOIC at [guadalupe.stratman@us.army.mil](mailto:guadalupe.stratman@us.army.mil) and include author's name, rank, unit and contact information.

The **Ivy Leaf** reserves the right to edit submissions selected for the paper.

For further information on deadlines, questions, comments or a request to be on our distribution list, email the Editor or call VoIP 242-4093 or DSN (318) 847-1855.



## Ask Dr. Feel Good

MND-B surgeon's office



*What's up Doc? I am a 29 year old Soldier who has been experiencing the formation of "boils" in the genital area since arriving to Iraq. Is this because I am using a community toilet, or is it because of sweating in that general area?*

*Signed: Boiling over in Baghdad*

Dear Boiling Over:

What you are describing is folliculitis, which is a common infection of the hair follicles and oil glands. This often occurs in areas of friction (where irritation causes debris to collect and swelling to close the pore), and then the natural bacteria on the skin cause an infection. Sometimes, the infection looks like a zit and other times the infection is deeper and can cause boils that may need further medical attention.

The best thing to do is to keep your skin clean by bathing often and using an antibacterial soap in the areas of concern (body wash). If you have a problem that lasts more than a few days, then you should see your healthcare provider to be sure you get proper evaluation and treatment.

To ease your mind, this is not something you pick up from the toilet, shower or the Soldier sitting next to you. Remembering GO#1 will keep you from picking up those infections.

*What's up Doc? I heard that we must drink up to 8 glasses of water per day. The other night I was watching TV, and I saw a news story which said that we don't need to drink 8 glasses because we also get water in our food.*

*I like water, but drinking so much of it, even when I am not thirsty, is making me not want to drink any at all. Besides, it makes me have to use the latrine more often, and when we are out on missions, this can be bothersome.*

*Which is true?*

*Signed: 8 is Enough*

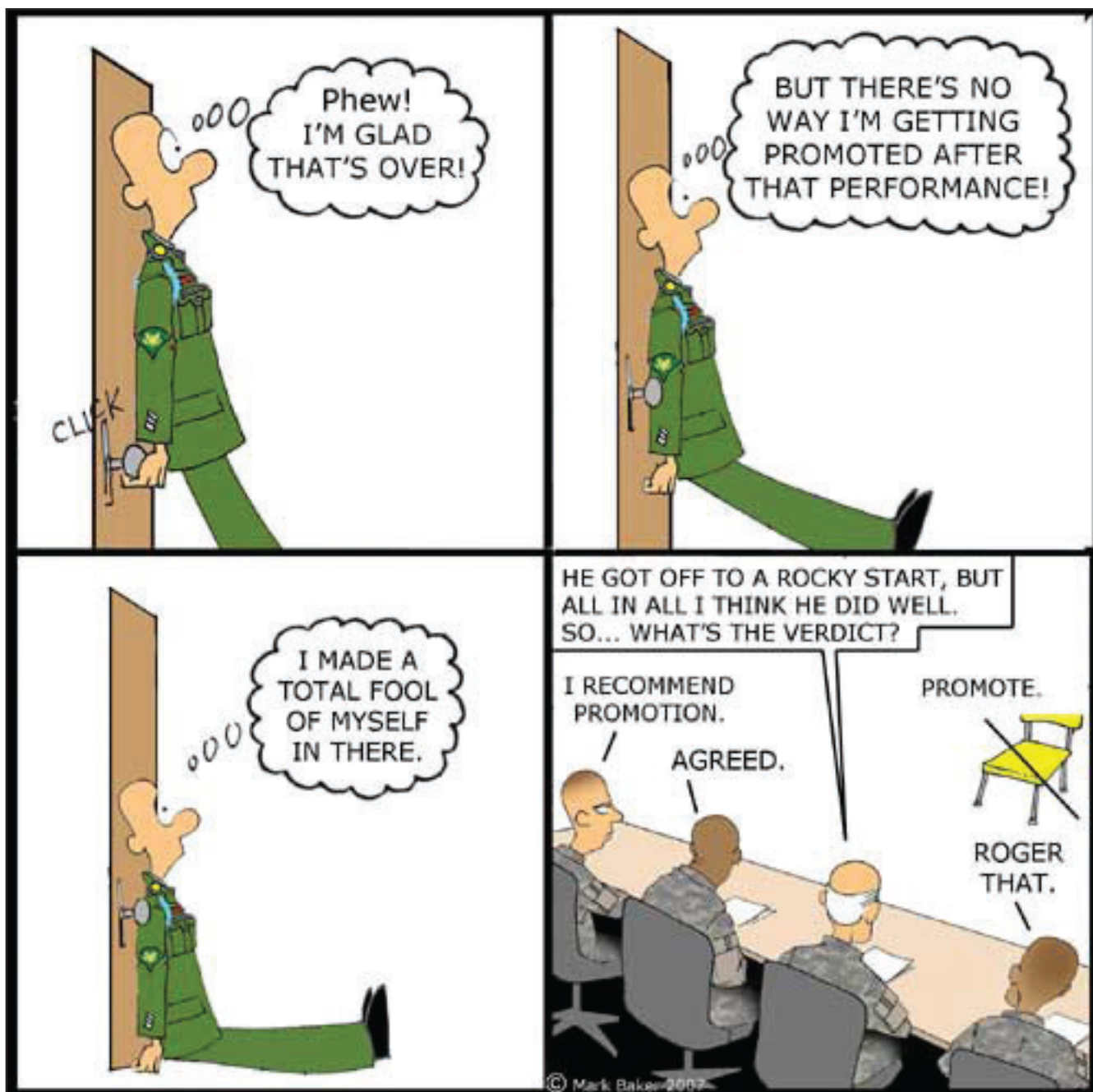
Dear 8 is Enough:

This is a great question and the advice is pretty clear (no pun intended). There is no magic amount of water that will be right for all occasions. The most important thing to remember is to look at your urine. If it is dark, then you should drink more. If it is light (like lemonade), then you are probably doing OK at that time. Make sure you are urinating every 3 hours or so – any less than that and you are likely dehydrated as well.

Many Soldiers have said they like to run "a quart low" if they are going on patrol so they don't have to urinate while out. Given the summer conditions, that can be dangerous. Remember that body armor can add up to 10 degrees to the ambient temperature and does not allow proper cooling so staying hydrated to avoid heat injury is very important.

Another fact – by the time you feel thirsty, you are already 5 percent dehydrated, and you lose 20 percent in aerobic performance capacity. At 10 percent dehydration, cooling gets affected and the risk for heat stroke becomes a real problem. So, there is not much room for error. Bottom line, watch your urine color and how long it has been since you were in the bathroom. Be careful to ensure that you don't get behind on your fluids because the consequences could be deadly.

Letters for Dr. Feel Good should be placed in the "Doc Box" located in the D-Main entrance, or email to mndb\_pad@mnd-b.army.mil.



## Word on the Street: What NBA player will win this year's most valuable player?



**Pfc. Kawmi Robinson**  
Brooklyn, N.Y.  
cavalry scout  
HHC, 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.



**Spc. Terrence Muller**  
Marshall Islands  
paralegal  
2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.

“Kobe (Bryant) because he reminds me of (Michael) Jordan, and he's one of the best all-around players we have right now.”

“Kobe (Bryant). He's been dominating games, helping his team secure the number one seed in the west.”



**Sgt. 1st Class John Nagy**  
Clarksville, Tenn.  
PSYOP planner  
2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.

“Lebron James, because he is so physical and dominates the court and the flow of the game.”



# News briefs

## MND-B engages criminals, seize weapons in Sadr City

*MND-B PAO*  
BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division – Baghdad aerial weapons teams killed seven criminals and Soldiers seized weapons in separate incidents in eastern Baghdad April 19.

The aerial weapons team engaged with a Hellfire missile and killed two criminals transporting weapons at approximately 6:30 p.m. in the Sadr City district of eastern Baghdad. The AWT also destroyed two machine guns in the attack.

At approximately 8:27 p.m., Coalition Forces were attacked by criminals with small-arms fire. They returned fire killing one.

Shortly after at approximately 8:39 p.m. in another section in the Sadr City district, Coalition Forces engaged attacking criminals, killing another.

At approximately 9:40 p.m., an aerial weapons team identified four weapons crates in an open field of the Sadr City district. The AWT engaged destroying all four weapons crates.

In a separate incident, three criminals with weapons were identified driving a truck at approximately 10:13 p.m. in the Sadr City district of eastern Baghdad. An AWT engaged with a Hellfire missile, killing the criminals.

“We are making a statement with these engagements,” said Lt. Col. Steve Stover, MND-B and 4th Infantry Division spokesman. “Criminals violating the rule of law by committing violent acts or with the intent of committing violence will be targeted.”

Earlier in the day, Soldiers from 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment seized weapons in a fire station at approximately 8:50 a.m. while conducting clearance operations in the southern portion of the Sadr City district. The weapons included 20 AK-47 rifles with 40 loaded magazines, one PKC machine gun with three magazines, 3,100 loose rounds as well as various miscellaneous weapons parts.

## Aerial weapons team kills 9 criminals

*MND-B PAO*  
BAGHDAD – An aerial weapons team from Multi-National Division – Baghdad killed nine Special Groups criminals who attacked Iraqi Army soldiers with rocket-propelled grenades in Baghdad at approximately 8 a.m. April 6.

After they were observed firing rocket-propelled grenades at the Iraqi Army soldiers, the air weapons team engaged the attackers by firing a Hellfire missile killing three.

The team identified four more criminals fleeing the scene and attempting to their hide weapons in a vehicle. The AWT fired a missile and destroyed the vehicle, killing six criminals.

No Coalition forces or civilian casualties have been reported.

“Iraqi Security Forces and MND-Baghdad and will continue to target the enemies of this city with precise and decisive action” said Lt. Col. Steve Stover, Multi-National Division – Baghdad spokesman.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Joseph Rivera Rebolledo, 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

## Eyes in the sky

BAGHDAD – A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter flies over the skies of Baghdad April 2 during sunset while on mission. The helicopters continue to play a vital role in Iraq by transporting Soldiers to and from forward operating bases for missions throughout Iraq.

## MND-B Soldiers kill 13 criminals

*MND-B PAO*  
BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers killed 13 criminals in separate engagements in Baghdad April 9.

At approximately 8:35 p.m., Soldiers from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, manning a combined checkpoint with Iraqi National Policemen from 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st National Police Division, were attacked by criminals with small-arms fire from a rooftop nearby in northeastern Baghdad. Soldiers returned fire and killed one criminal.

Soldiers from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), killed four criminals in northwestern Baghdad at approximately 9:40 p.m. after they were attacked with rocket-propelled grenades at a checkpoint.

An aerial weapons team provided security for Soldiers emplacing concrete barriers at a joint security station in northeastern Baghdad who were attacked with small-arms fire at approximately 11:10 p.m. The AWT engaged the criminals with two hellfire missiles and killed four.

At approximately 11:45 p.m., Soldiers from 2-101 Abn. Div. killed four criminals after being attacked with small-arms fire from two different locations in northwestern Baghdad.

## Soldiers detain suspected criminal ringleader

*1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.*  
BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers captured a suspected criminal leader in southern Baghdad April 12.

The criminal suspect is accused of conducting crimes against Iraqi Security and Coalition forces operating in the Rashid district of Baghdad.

## MND-B Soldiers defend themselves, kill 6 criminals

*MND-B PAO*  
BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division—Baghdad soldiers killed six criminals after they were attacked in eastern Baghdad at approximately 10:30 p.m., April 13.

Soldiers from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, were attacked by rocket propelled grenades while conducting a patrol in their M1A2 Abrams tank. A rotary-wing air weapons team was called in to assist the soldiers on the ground.

The aircrew witnessed armed criminals hiding behind a parked vehicle and another in an open field. The air weapons team engaged and killed the lone individual. Moments later, soldiers in the M1A2 identified additional armed criminals on the rooftop of a nearby building.

The criminals then attacked the soldiers with RPG fire. In self defense, the tankers engaged the armed men, killing five criminals.

“Coalition forces will continue to defend themselves against criminals who ignore the rule of Iraqi law,” said Lt. Col. Steve Stover, MND-B spokesman.

“We will do so with precision and definitive force.”

## UAV kills 6 heavily armed criminals

*MND-B PAO*  
BAGHDAD – Coalition forces from Multi-National Division – Baghdad operating an unmanned aerial vehicle observed a large group of criminals with rocket-propelled grenade launchers and a mortar tube in northeast Baghdad at approximately 9:30 p.m. April 10.

The UAV fired a Hellfire missile killing six heavily armed criminals at approximately 9:45 p.m.

“U.S. Soldiers and their Iraqi partners are always vigilant in our efforts to protect the Iraqi people from criminals,” said Lt. Col. Steve Stover, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

“We remain committed to their safety, welfare and well-being.”

## MND-B Soldiers find emplaced IED

*1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.*  
BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers unearthed an improvised-explosive device while acting on a tip from a concerned Iraqi citizen April 10 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

Soldiers from Troop A, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, attached to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, received a tip that a possible IED was buried within their area.

Upon their arrival, the “Ghost Squadron” Soldiers found and disposed of 20 pounds of homemade explosives buried under the surface of the road.



# MND-B Airmen pass reigns during ceremony

By Sgt. Mark Matthews

MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Air support from the Air Force is essential for the Army to safely and accurately accomplish its mission, but just like all service members in Iraq, there is a time to serve and a time to return home.

A transfer of authority ceremony was held at the Multi-National Division – Baghdad headquarters building for the outgoing and incoming Airmen with the 11th Expeditionary Air Support Operation Support Squadron April 17.

Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, a Hattiesburg, Miss., native, who serves as the commanding general for the 4th Infantry Division and MND-B, was present at the ceremony and said the Airmen leaving did a great job, and they will remember their time in Iraq for years to come.

“I think years from now when you are old, like me, you’ll thank God for the Air Force and the opportunity to serve in Iraq,” Hammond said. “You all are a tremendous group of men and women and most people wouldn’t believe what you all have done here.”

During the ceremony, awards were presented to each of the outgoing Airmen, including two Bronze Stars and a host of Army Commendation Medals.

“It’s hard to describe in words what I feel when I see the support from the 4th Inf. Div.,” said Air Force Lt. Col. Michael Reed, a native of Harker Heights, Texas, who serves as the outgoing commander for the 11th EASOS. “I would not be anywhere else. I can say from the bottom of my heart, as I represent my Airmen here, they have really done a great job throughout the whole MND-B.”

What made this group of Airmen unique was the fact the unit was made up of Airmen from many different units, who were brought together and successfully accomplished the mission, said Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Mark Ericson, a native of Hershey, Pa, who serves as the squadron superintendent with the 11th EASOS.

“At our height, we had a maximum of 114 people represented by 15 different units back at home,” Ericson said. “In the Army, you are used to seeing that now with the modular Army.

Well, in the Air Force, with a smaller unit of 114 people, modulated by 15 different units at home – that’s a lot. I was very amazed at how well they performed.”

Another big accomplishment for the unit during its six-month rotation was the successful transition between two divisions – 1st Cavalry Division and the 4th Infantry Division, Ericson said.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Mark Matthews, MND-B PAO

Air Force Lt. Col. Michael Reed, a native of Harker Heights, Texas, who serves as the outgoing commander of the 11th Expeditionary Air Support Operation Support Squadron, presents Army Commendation Medals to his Airmen during a transfer of authority ceremony held at the Multi-National Division – Baghdad’s headquarters building April 17.

Hammond also expressed his specific appreciation for the work the 11th EASOS did with the air support and management of the Sadr City District in Baghdad.

Due to the limited air space and the number of aircraft in the area, it was difficult to ensure each specific aircraft had the space available to conduct its mission.

“Sadr City is a very tight air space,” Ericson said. “There are helicopters flying in there, Army (unmanned aerial vehicles), larger UAVs, like the predators, and fighters all flying in that very tight air space.”

“So what they did was work up a way to separate those aircraft,” Ericson added. “So that everyone can work in the same air space, at the same time, or in conjunction right

after each other, and still be able to engage targets.”

The outgoing Airmen seem to have paved the way for the new Airmen of the 11th EASOS to continue to build and develop new ways to more efficiently conduct air operations in Baghdad.

“It was an honor and privilege to serve with the Maj. Gen. Hammond and the Soldiers of the 4th Inf. Div.,” Reed said. “We will most definitely be thinking of them all when return home.”

Although the unit’s flag will stay in place, the faces will change, as the new group of Airmen with the 11th EASOS settles in and begins to continue the mission their predecessors started.

## MND-B deputy commander stops to smell flowers, flour

By Maj. Al Hing

2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Brig. Gen. Mike Milano, deputy commanding general, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, visited the Taji Qada, northwest of Baghdad, to see a local greenhouse project and the Taji flour mill April 5.

It was an opportunity to see parts of the agricultural progress in the rural area and a chance to stop and smell the roses.

Lt. Col. Harvey Fitzgerald, from Hermosa S.D., provided insight on the visit. Fitzgerald serves as the senior agricultural advisor of the embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team – Baghdad 5, attached to 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, MND-B,

“Working with our Inma partners, we are identifying areas that are critical areas of the value chain.” Inma, or growth, teams are contracted to assist Coalition Forces and the

### Brig. Gen. Milano visits local Taji greenhouse project, flour mill

Government of Iraq in developing agricultural programs across Iraq.

Fitzgerald further defined the network as parts of the agricultural levels that are needed to provide food for the Iraqi people.

“It starts with soil and seeds to get the right product,” he said.

“Whether you want vegetables for the Families, or grains for bread or animal feed, you have to start at the soil.”

What was shown in the greenhouses was the product from the soil. The tomatoes, eggplants, beans and other vegetables were all part of the chain.

“The next step is to get packing houses, where we can cool down the vegetables so they don’t ripen all at the same time and we can allow the Iraqi people to have fresh

tomatoes across a longer period of time.” Fitzgerald continued. “When that happens, we’ll move closer to achieving a sustainable, profitable system (growing vegetables) for the Iraqi people.”

In the fields outside the greenhouses were barley and wheat, still green and growing. When ripe, the wheat will be harvested and taken over to the flour mill. The next step of the grain is the subject of the visit at the Taji flour mill, showing the process of grinding the grain through the mill to flour bags for distribution.

“This is a great opportunity for the general to come see the agriculture process in Taji,” said Dan Skotnicki, from South Fork, Penn., and agricultural advisor for 2nd SBCT. “The stability of the agricultural community will

ultimately provide support in the rest of the Baghdad community,” Skotnicki said.

The grain was moved by high-pressure air from silos to the main building’s grinders through an array of tubes. From there, the grain was roughly ground to remove the husk, which was also air separated and the heavier grain dropped into the grinders.

Three floors of pipes and grinders led to the final packing level of the flour, where workers busily manned baggers. The 70-pound bags of flour dropped through a belt system onto the trucks and were driven off to local bakeries, shops and markets.

“We know that (Brig. Gen.) Milano understands that ePRTs have the knowledge to shape the agricultural region. That ultimately will assist the stability in jobs and providing food for the Iraqi people,” said Fitzgerald.

With the tour complete, there were a couple rose bushes of bright red and white blossoms. Milano paused to smell the roses.





## 1st Sustainment Bde.

# Field Artillery Soldiers build hope in Assriya

By **Spc. Andrea Merritt**

1st Sus. Bde. PAO

ASSRIYA, Iraq – The Soldiers of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, a California National Guard unit attached to the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, spend most of their nights conducting convoy security missions.

Although they have a job that requires them to be nocturnal, a few of the Soldiers have chosen to use their daylight hours to work in a village located outside of Camp Taji.

Since February, Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Battery A, 1st Bn., 143rd FA Regt., use their personal time between missions to deliver supplies and make repairs to schools in the village of Assriya.

“When we first started, we started with volunteers, but everybody volunteered so it ended up 100 percent participation,” said Sgt. 1st Class Richard Weaver, a Greenville, Calif., native, and the platoon leader for 2nd Plt., Battery A, 1st Bn.

“It’s a good cultural awakening for these guys. It gives them a side of Iraq that they normally don’t get to see and a chance to interact with the Iraqi people,” said Weaver.

Weaver, who is a teacher in the civilian world, organized a drive at his school back in California to collect school supplies after he saw the need Iraqi schools had for basic materials during a previous deployment to Iraq in 2005.

After he was given clearance to go into Assriya, the platoon distributed the initial packages, which were filled with notebook paper, pencils, colored pencils, crayons, chalk and staplers.

“When we first came in, they only had one stapler for the whole school, and keep in mind there are about 450 students. There were no computers, no copiers,” Weaver explained.

“I have a \$1 million budget to run my school back home



U.S. Army courtesy photo

Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, a California National Guard unit attached to 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, unload concertina wire to place around the wall of a girls’ school in Assriya, Iraq, a village located outside of Camp Taji. Since February, the Soldiers have delivered school supplies and made some repairs to the schools in the village.

and here they only had one stapler. It’s an extreme situation over here,” said Staff Sgt. Richard Martinez, a squad leader in the platoon and a gun truck commander for the unit, who is also a principal at Washington School in Cloverdale Unified School District in California.

Once the supplies were delivered, the platoon asked if there was anything else they could assist with.

The platoon has also placed concertina wire around the wall of the girls’ school and worked on repairing a leaky roof.

Working on the school house in Assriya has been hard work for the Soldiers, but it is a task that many of them find rewarding, especially because of the children in the village.

village than anyone else has done,” said Sheik Luqman.

The unit is scheduled to return home in April and the work they have done will leave a lasting impression on the villagers in Assriya as well as the Soldiers of 2nd Platoon.

“It’s been an eye opener. It’s a totally different experience that nobody could ever understand unless they came here and were a part of it themselves,” said Spc. Shane Miniger, a Hughson, Calif., native, and a gun truck driver for 2nd Plt., Battery A, 1st Bn.

“Maybe they will have a little bit of a different opinion about troops in this country and know that we’re here to help out and affect them in some positive ways,” Miniger concluded.

“I’m just real glad to be on this. I don’t get to go on a lot of missions as an armorer, but this definitely would have been the one I chose if I had my choice of missions,” said Sgt. Brent Courtney, a Hesperia, Calif., native, and armorer for Battery A, 1st Bn.

“The kids make my day when I go out there. As bad as things are, they still have a good attitude about everything,” added Courtney, who was asked to get involved with the project because of his background as a general contractor.

The platoon is mostly made up of combat engineers, so doing the work at the schools was not a problem. Courtney did much of the construction around the unit’s area of operations and was asked to run the work crew for the mission at the school.

The children bonded with the 2nd Platoon Soldiers and even try to help them with some of the projects as they work. The village sheikh, Sheikh Luqman Raheem, is very grateful for the work that has been done in his area.

“Thank you so much for what you do. You have done more for my

## Sus. Bde. commander meets with Taji base general

By **Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude**

1st Sus. Bde., PAO

CAMPTAJI, Iraq – It started with a handshake March 29 between Col. Kevin O’Connell, a Clinton, Md., native, and the 1st Sustainment Brigade commander, and Iraqi Staff Brig. Gen. Abdul Mahady Sharaque Sabah, a native of Diyala, and the Taji base commander.

“Today was the first meeting between the 1st Sustainment Brigade commander and the base commander of Taji,” said Lt. Col. Mark Meyer, a native of Neillville, Wis., and the senior advisor to the Logistics Military Assistance Team for Coalition Army Assistance Training Team, Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq, and the person responsible for setting up the meeting. “It was important to put a face to the Coalition side of Taji,” stated Meyer.

The two leaders sat down in Sabah’s office with some of their key staff and shared chi, discussed needs, and got to know one another. Sabah is a 27-year veteran of the Iraqi Army and was assigned to the role as

“The Iraqi Soldiers work with very little, but they do a good job. They do their very best. They love their country.”

**Iraqi Staff Brig. Gen. Abdul Mahady Sharaque Sabah**  
Taji base commander

base commander of Taji six months ago.

“We look forward to a partnership with Gen. Sabah to improve the support he gives to his customers, the Iraqi units on Taji and in the surrounding area,” stated O’Connell.

Taji is the largest Iraqi Army base in Iraq, with maintenance depots, supply depots, the 9th Iraqi Army Division, and all their schools; Sabah’s span of control and responsibility is huge and his resources are scarce.

“I have so many challenges: water, ice, fuel for power,” stated Sabah, “but I am hopeful. I am looking forward to working with my counterparts in the 1st Sustainment Brigade.”

O’Connell also looks toward a brighter future.

“We’re here in a partnership role to assist in teaching, coaching and mentoring Gen. Sabah’s staff in identifying their shortcomings, and then, through training, to help develop a plan to improve their mission-readiness posture,” declared O’Connell.

“We’re trying to synergistically use the resources that the Iraqi Army has inherent to what they are doing and what they’ve built up for themselves over the last five years, and then linking Col. O’Connell and the 1st Sustainment Brigade’s Soldiers, resources and expertise in an effort to marry these two groups up; again, with the goal of increasing Gen. Sabah’s capabilities,” said Meyers.

“It’s a great team effort here – if only to help the base commander move forward with

things that we can do to help with capabilities where we have expertise, like supply, maintenance, distribution, medical and things that we share in our comparison roles,” said O’Connell.

The meeting lasted a little more than two hours and already there are plans for more meetings with the two respective commanders and their staffs in an effort to get the partnership moving and producing results.

“The 1st Sustainment Brigade was like a breath of fresh air coming in here to help. They are partnering with their Iraqi neighbors here on Camp Taji. Everyone from the brigade commander to the specialist I’ve run into has been totally team-oriented,” stated Meyer.

“The Iraqi soldiers work with very little, but they do a good job. They do their very best. They love their country,” stated Sabah.

“It is my hope that our Army will be equipped to the same level as the rest of the good armies of the world, and that we will be powerful enough to protect our people and our country.”



3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.



# Baby left at doorstep finds new home

**By Sgt. Zach Mott**  
3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD – Spotting irregularities is a tactic that is drilled into the minds of Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers throughout training and in practice while in Iraq.

Soldiers recently watched as a car pulled up to an entry control point at Forward Operating Base Callahan in northern Baghdad. They continued to watch as a woman stepped out of the car holding a bag. Once the woman dropped the bag near the gate, internal alarms were ringing and a careful search was called for and conducted.

That search yielded a newborn baby wrapped tightly in several cloths. Soldiers raced to the bag, retrieved the child and brought him to the aid station to be examined.

“We unwrapped it to make sure he was alive – and he wasn’t sick, he wasn’t dead, he wasn’t injured,” said Staff Sgt. Paul Briscoe, the Aid Station NCOIC at FOB Callahan. “He was a perfectly healthy baby. I’m guessing three to seven days old. He was in perfect health. There wasn’t a scratch on him.”

This unlikely sight brought images of the Las Vegas native’s two children to mind.

“It was like my kids were newborns again,” said Briscoe, who serves with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

After the medics were satisfied the baby, who by this

time had drawn the nickname “Alex Callahan” after the Soldier who found him and the name of the base, was in no need of immediate medical attention, the focus shifted to what they would do with the child.

An interpreter working at the base volunteered to go to a nearby store to buy diapers and formula while another interpreter took care of Alex. Briscoe said the aid station became a hub of activity as word spread throughout the small base of the new arrival.

“I’ve fed him twice, just holding him, watching him, making sure that he’s alright,” said Doreen Haddad, an interpreter with 1-68 AR, who helped care for Alex. “I’ve changed his diapers twice. I wanted to give him a bath, but I wasn’t able to.”

While a forward operating base isn’t the ideal location for a baby, Soldiers and those working at FOB Callahan ensured that Alex’s stay there was as comfortable as possible.

The baby is to be adopted by the brother of a local national, who works at the base. The brother, and his wife, have been married five years and have been unable to have a baby of their own. The interpreters at FOB Callahan have taken a collection to donate to the Family to help care for the baby.

Despite the thousands of miles that separates the Soldiers from their Families in Colorado, one constant remains with this baby and those they left behind.

“He’s sleeping and pooping – just like a regular baby,” Briscoe said.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Zach Mott, 3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.  
An Iraqi baby boy, nicknamed “Alex Callahan,” after the Soldier who found him and the base that he was left at, sleeps on a bed April 5 at Forward Operating Base Callahan in Baghdad.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Joseph Rivera Rebolledo, 3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.  
Spc. Michael Passeretti, a native of Saint Paul, Minn., cuts a piece of wood with an electric saw while helping to build a new headquarters building for the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, at Forward Operating Base War Eagle.

## Engineers construct 3rd BCT headquarters

**By Spc. Joseph Rivera Rebolledo**  
3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD – Soldiers from the Minnesota National Guard’s 851st Vertical Engineer Company, attached to Multi-National Division – Baghdad, are constructing a three-story structure that will soon become the headquarters building for the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, at Forward Operating Base War Eagle in northern Baghdad.

“The structure consists of more than 10,000 square feet of construction, what would be considered in the United States as a commercial site,” said Spc. Michael Passeretti, a native of Saint Paul, Minn., who serves as a carpenter and noncommissioned officer in charge of the project with the 851st VEC.

Thus far, the crew has torn down and rebuilt most of the internal structure – in little more than 2.5 weeks, he said.

Passeretti, who has more than 20-years of experience in the field as a civilian general contractor, along with his team, was given the responsibility to deliver this project before April 10.

The project is “a high profile mission,” said 1st LT. Josh Savage, a native of Saint Paul, Minn., who serves as a platoon leader for the 851st VEC.

“This is the first three-story building we have ever built,” Savage said.

On the economy, a construction of this kind would cost an estimated \$600,000 to

\$1 million in the United States, Passeretti said, adding that most of the Soldiers of the 851st VEC working on the project have military occupational skills other than vertical engineers.

The project, he said, has provided him the opportunity to teach the Soldiers how to use the tools and deal with the measurements. Even though the Soldiers may not have the school-trained skills for working on this type of a project, the team is running ahead of schedule and is projected to be meet its April 10 target date.

“We are fortunate to have the leadership we have,” said Passeretti. “They allow me to do my job based on my 20 years of experience.”

The Soldiers have managed to keep up with the pace and demands of the given jobs while down-range, as evidenced by the fact they have constructed more than 100,000-square feet of floor in little less than the six months they have had “boots on ground,” he added.

“I’m highly impressed,” said Savage. “I feel like a coach – coaching a pro team.”

For the Soldiers of the 851st VEC, the construction of the brigade headquarters is merely one of numerous projects the team will face together. Next up for them will be building a Morale, Welfare and Recreation facility at War Eagle, which, of course, will be followed by various other missions throughout Multi-National Division – Baghdad.





## 4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

### Construction crew works on Rusafa courthouse

*Photos by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jason Bailey  
1st Combat Camera Sqdn., 4th BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div.*



◀ BAGHDAD – A construction worker repairs the dome of the courthouse building in the Rusafa province of eastern Baghdad April 6.

▶ BAGHDAD – Construction workers pour concrete at the Rusafa courthouse construction site in eastern Baghdad, April 6. Inspectors noticed significant progress at the site since their last visit in February, and Iraqi engineers who supervise the project say it will be complete in June.



◀ BAGHDAD – A construction crew works on the outside of the Rusafa courthouse building in eastern Baghdad April 6. Inspectors noticed significant progress at the site since their last visit in February, and Iraqi engineers who supervise the project say it will be complete in June.



## 18th MP Bde.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. William Greer, Combat Camera, MND-B

### Joint brothers in arms

BAGHDAD – An Iraqi Policeman, along with 2nd Lt. Stacy Bixler (left), who hails from East Berlin, Pa., and Staff Sgt. Christopher Gronli, who is from Madison Wis., patrol local neighborhood near a Joint Security Station in the Meshahadah Province, north of Baghdad, April 8. Bixler and Gronli are both MPs from 411th Military Police Company, 716th Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.





1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.



# MND-B Soldiers field MRAPs

## New vehicle provides troops added protection against IEDs

**By Spc. David Hodge**  
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers are patrolling the streets of the Rashid District in the Department of Defense's latest defensive measure to defeat the Improvised Explosive Device, the number one threat against Soldiers in Iraq.

Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, stationed at Forward Operating Base Falcon, are trading their up-armored gun trucks for the Mine Resistant and Ambush Protected vehicles recently issued to U.S. Armed Forces in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Pfc. Shaun Landers, personnel security detachment, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., said he prefers the MRAP over the humvee.

"The MRAP was built around the Soldiers," stated Landers, a cavalry scout from Anchorage, Alaska. "I feel very safe and confident operating this vehicle. It gives us that tight turning radius we desperately need."

In October 2007, the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, became the first unit in Iraq to receive the MRAP vehicles, said Sgt. Marquis Dawkins, a mortarman assigned to the PSD, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th BCT.

"I'm impressed with the MRAP," said Dawkins. "The first time I saw it, it was intimidating. It was striking."

During the last six months, Dawkins said the MRAP has proven itself effective in the war on terrorism.

"If a bad guy sees the MRAP coming down the road, he would probably turn and go in the opposite direction," said Dawkins, who hails from Brooklyn, N.Y.

The better the protection, the better Soldiers can pay attention to the mission at hand, said Spc. Chris-

tian Schmidt, an infantryman assigned to the PSD, HHD, 1st BCT.

"The MRAP makes it easier for us to focus on the mission outside the wire," said Schmidt, who hails from Ponce, Puerto Rico.

Sgt. Michael Banaszak, infantryman assigned to the PSD, HHD, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., is the truck commander for the 1st "Raider" BCT's brigade command sergeant major, Command Sgt. Maj. Michael I. Bobb.

According to the International Mine-Protected Vehicle student guide the v-shaped hull of the MRAP is designed to deflect the force from explosions that originate underneath the vehicle, which increases the survivability for Soldiers.

"The Army has adapted to the ever-changing war climate here in Iraq," stated Banaszak, a native of Roseville, Calif.

The height of the MRAP is substantially higher so Soldiers must be safety conscious when operating the vehicle on the battlefield.

"The drivers and gunners have to consistently communicate," Banaszak explained.

The gunner is the only Soldier in the vehicle with a 360-degree view, he added. The driver and gunner must effectively communicate to successfully navigate low-hanging obstacles on the road.

"Overall in a combat zone, the MRAP should stand the test of time," explained Banaszak.

Banaszak said that the fielding of the MRAP vehicle shows the U.S. Army's commitment to protecting its Soldiers and the 1.2 million residents of the Rashid district.

"As long as the vehicles are safer and prevent Soldiers from sustaining injuries, I'd have to say it's a definite improvement," Banaszak said.

The Raider Brigade will take responsibility of the MRAPs while simultaneously assuming command from the 4th BCT, 1st Inf. Div., in April.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.  
Pfc. Shaun Hoffman, an infantryman attached to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, exits a Mine Resistant and Ambush Protected vehicle in southern Baghdad April 5.

## Warriors Bn. works daily to help Doura citizens reclaim freedom, security, stability

*From Raiders Pg. 1*

The units of the 2-4 Inf. Regt. have partnered with the local Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police forces, as well as the Sons of Iraq (Abna al-Iraq), to better secure the Doura mulhallas, or neighborhoods, from criminal and terrorist activity.

Soldiers maintain a presence in Doura 24 hours a day to better assist local ISF in providing security for the approximately 5,000 homes in the local community, said 2nd Lt. Jay Parsons, a platoon leader assigned to Company B, 2-4 Inf. Regt.

Units conduct joint and platoon-sized operations with their Iraqi counterparts every day, operating out of combat outposts and joint security stations in Doura, he explained.

"I try to ensure that we conduct some type of combat operation every day," said Parsons, who calls Wichita, Kan., his home. "Be it cordon and search, or dismounted and mounted patrols, it's a constant thing. There are still a small group of criminal elements within the district that we are weeding out, but I do not see a major threat."

Security is not the platoon's only function, said Parsons, a graduate of Wichita State University with a bachelor's degree in history and criminal justice. He said his Soldiers also conduct daily atmospherics meetings with the Doura residents and visit local community businesses.

"There is still a lot of potential for growth in there," Parsons said. "There is a need for community services, and there



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.  
Sgt. Keith Fosmire, a team leader assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, registers a Doura resident with a Biometric Automated Toolset System April 5.

are definitely capable people within the district to run all that."

Company commanders of the 2-4 Inf. Regt. are also working to stimulate the local economy and assist local business owners with micro-grants, a small business loan to help revitalize areas such as the Doura Market, he added.

Sgt. Keith Fosmire, a native of Cloversfield, N.Y., and a team leader in Parsons' platoon, said that in the short time since his unit began working with the Doura residents, he has seen an improvement in the quality of life and an increase in the people's respect for their community.

"We had a big problem with garbage," said Fosmire, who describes himself as being devoted to the military and the mission. "Now we're actually seeing the guys in the yellow jump suits and garbage trucks going around picking up the trash. And, we're seeing more jobs and more activity in the area than before."

Fosmire, who is on his fifth deployment of his 11-year career, said that he accredits the unit's success to the squared away and dedicated Soldiers of the 2-4 Inf. Regt., as well as the extensive training the battalion conducted last year prior to its deployment.

He also attributed the progress made in Doura to the co-operation between the Iraqi people and Coalition Forces, as well as the work accomplished by previous units, such as the 2nd Bn., 12th Inf. Regt., 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div., from Fort Carson, Colo.

The Warrior Battalion arrived at Baghdad in December to become part of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

The 2-4 Inf. Regt. will attach to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., as the Raider BCT bids farewell to the outgoing unit and assumes responsibility of the Rashid district.





## 2nd BCT, 25th Inf. Div.

# IA, Warrior Soldiers hand out toys, school supplies

**By Sgt. Waldemar Rivera**

*2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.*

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers from 225th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, and Iraqi Army Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 34th Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, handed out school supplies and toys April 13 to the children at the Asim Bin Omar School in Sab al Bour, northwest of Baghdad.

The purpose of Operation Bounty Hunter Pencil was to bring school supplies and toys to students of two schools near the city of Taji, said 2nd Lt. Lauren Bowen, a native of Roscoe, Ill., and platoon leader with Company A, 225th BSB.

The convoy left in the morning toward the Asim Bin Omar School, near Taji, where they were joined by a group soldiers from the IA.

After a short conversation with the school administrator, the group was led into classrooms to hand over school supplies and toys to the children of the school.

“These toys were sent to you, children, with lots of love from the American people,” said Bowen, from the front of the classroom to the children.

Soldiers from the U.S. Army and the IA group both helped with the distribution of the toys and school supplies among the rows of children in the classrooms. After the distribution of gifts was done, and after a signal from the teacher, the children said out loud: “thank you very much,” as a token of friendship.

Sgt. 1st Class Yvonne Barnes, a Lane, S.C., native, said it was an honor to deliver American goods from our American children to the Iraqi children.

“It was my first contact with Iraqi children, and I was impressed of how well the children verbalized English phrases such as ‘thank you very much,’” said Barnes, the operations sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 225th BSB.

Then the convoy headed toward the That Al Natakhein School, also at the town of Sab Al Bour, where phase two of the mission took place. Toys and school supplies were distributed among the students by Soldiers from both armies once again under the supervision of school officials.

The event was closed with a promise from Bowen to return to both schools with more gifts from the American people.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Waldemar Rivera, 2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.

Second Lt. Lauren Bowen, a native of Roscoe, Ill., and platoon leader with the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, hands out school supplies northwest of Baghdad April 13.

## U.S. Soldiers teach IA soldiers valuable skills for route-clearance missions

**By Sgt. Jerome Bishop**

*2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.*

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers take to the roads daily around Camp Taji, northwest of Baghdad, to search for improvised-explosive devices to ensure the safety of Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces and the people of Iraq.

The Soldiers from the 66th Engineer Company, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, MND-B, who conduct route-clearance missions, took steps April 5 and 6 to teach their Iraqi Army counterparts what it takes to make their own roads safe.

“We’re incorporating the Iraqi engineers into our engineers, and we’re showing them the basics of what we do on a route-clearance mission on a dismounted level,” said 1st Sgt. Jonathon White, a San Francisco, native, who serves with the 66th Eng. Co. “We’re responsible for the route-clearance mission for the entire (2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.), so our goal is to integrate the Iraqi Army into our route-clearance packages and have them take part in our route-clearance operations.”

The end goal is to train the IA soldiers to assume full control of route clearance, White added.

The two-day course, which incorporated 10 IA engineers, taught the basics of route-clearing operations, with the end goal of having the ISF join MND-B engineers on the roads during missions.

“We took the engineer’s from the IA and brought them out here to a training site and showed them ways to identify specific types of IEDs and indicators that surround them,” said Sgt. John Yost, a Greeley, Colo., native, who serves as a team leader with the 66th Eng. Co. and a course instructor.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jerome Bishop, 2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.

First Sgt. Jonathon White, a San Francisco native, talks to an Iraqi Army engineer April 5 about leadership practices as part of on-going training teaching the Iraqi Soldiers about route-clearance operations northwest of Baghdad. White serves as the company first sergeant for the 66th Engineer Company, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Iraqi soldiers also learned how to determine the location of IEDs based on changes in the environment and how to properly react when one is found.

The crucial instrument of the training was its in-depth physical atmosphere. Soldiers from the 66th Eng. Co. took available land and resources to construct the training area, not far from their company headquarters, using resources at their disposal to build mock IEDs and hostile environments, said White.

“To put this package together, (we used) just resources we had internal to us and a good piece of ground. This isn’t a Powerpoint type of training device; this is hands-on, hands-

in-the-dirt, teaching them the grind of what it takes to be successful,” he added.

Getting the space and tools together to conduct training on such a level was merely one of many obstacles the Soldiers would have to overcome to conduct the training.

“The language barrier is a little difficult, but once they grasp the concept, they’re hungry to learn and they want more; it’s a little disappointing we can only train one group for two days,” said Yost.

While the Iraqi engineers only had two days to learn and practice proper dismounted route-clearance procedures, the simple notion of participating in the training was more than enough to get the soldiers of Iraq on the right path toward conducting their own missions down the road.

“We’re showing progression,” said White.

“As long as we’re taking one step forward, that’s a step in the right direction. It’s all about the small steps, and small steps lead to bigger steps, and this is one small step toward progression.”

The Iraqi soldiers want to achieve their goal of completing the training, and the Soldiers from the 66th Eng. Co. provided them the opportunity to take a huge step forward with the training. As soldiers, they have to learn and they have to achieve their goal, said Sgt. Kassim Obaid, the group noncommissioned officer of the Iraqi Army soldiers, through an interpreter.

While the Soldiers conducting route-clearance operations in support of the 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., are currently all U.S. Army Soldiers, training exercises such as the one set up by the Soldiers of the 66th Eng. Co. will open the door for the IA engineers to tackle the challenge of overcoming the deadly threat of roadside bombs.



## 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

1st Lt. Sam Rosenberg, a native of Fort Myers, Fla., patrols through the now-quiet western Baghdad neighborhood of Kadhamiyah April 2. Rosenberg serves as the platoon leader for 2nd Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

## ISF, CF join forces to ensure safety of local citizens

*From Strike patrol Pg. 1*

"We sent our trucks right in behind them," Rosenberg said. "They had interlocking fire on the enemy. There was a lot of fire, mostly RPGs."

As the platoon moved toward the site, its Soldiers were also fired upon at an intersection. With the amount of RPGs and small-arms fire being fired, said Henry, and the numerous caches hidden by the criminals in the area, the right side of the road caught fire.

The Soldiers of Rosenberg's platoon then saw an opportunity to push forward into a market to get a better angle of fire on the enemy. Fourth platoon shifted fire as Rosenberg's platoon pushed up into what they now call "Death Valley."

"On the right side, there was a huge fire, and to my left were alleyways," Rosenberg said. The Soldiers pulled security down the alleyways and were receiving fire from there also.

**"It was a shooting gallery; guys were popping out of everywhere,"**

he said. Criminals were popping out from corners and firing rounds, while others stood

atop balconies and rooftops and snuck in pop shots; however, it had no effect on the Soldiers.

"The gunners did an awesome job," said Rosenberg. Initially, the platoon sergeant's truck was in the lead.

One RPG hit right in front of his truck; then, as the criminal came back from behind his corner to fire, he was hit with .50-cal rounds. The gunner, Pfc. Hunter Bruns, saved his fellow comrades from being hit with an RPG.

"He saved my truck," said Rosenberg.

"Pfc. Bruns was absolutely incredible," said Rosenberg. "He was unloading on guys 150 meters away from him and shooting controlled pairs at their head."

He said he really couldn't say enough about how his platoon and the rest of the company performed that night and over the next couple of days.

"My guys did awesome."

**"With the exception of four guys, it was everyone's first time in contact,"**

said Rosenberg, "so you expect everyone to be nervous, but their training kicked in. Everyone was calm, controlled and did their

job perfectly. You've got 18- and 19-year-old Soldiers dealing with getting shot at for the first time, and they did as well as anybody could have ever asked."

For Pfc. Eric Weekly, a native of Urbana, Iowa, and a gunner for 1st Platoon, Co. D, it was his first time coming into contact with the enemy – and he made the most of it.

"We were sitting on Route Vernon facing northeast and an RPG flew over the truck from the west," he said.

"We swung around to PID the guy, and he shot another one. We got positive identification and engaged him with about ten rounds of .50-cal. and shot the guy as he went to shoot the third one."

Altogether, Rosenberg said he believes the company killed an estimated 12 terrorists.

However, the U.S. troops weren't the only ones who stayed in the fight, doing what they could to eliminate any enemy activity.

Henry said he believes the special groups criminals expected the Iraqi Army soldiers from the 5th Battalion, 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, to lay down their arms; however, that was not the case. Once the terrorists saw that the IA Soldiers were staying, they had to change their game plan.

"They proved they were there to stay and fight," Henry said.

"The first night out, all their guys were manning their (tactical checkpoints); they were securing the intersections they needed to secure."

The Iraqi Army battalion is responsible for manning checkpoints in the out muhallahs around Kadhamiyah, said Henry, who added he felt they did a good job not letting anyone within.

They secured alleyways, which the criminals were using to maneuver and fire upon Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces, Henry said.

"They are reliable," he declared

Perhaps it is a true testament of how far the Iraqi Army has come. Nearly a year ago, when Co. D, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division controlled the area, the Soldiers also faced a similar attack from special groups' forces, said Henry.

The Soldiers in the unit went to arrest a group of criminals at a building in Kadhamiyah and were

ambushed as well, he said.

At that time however, the IA did not help with the fight at all.

"We didn't see any of that happen this time. They were here to fight," said Henry.

The IA Soldiers played vital role securing a key checkpoint during the engagements, he said. Along the Tigris River, on one of the main routes in Kadhamiyah, the IA secured the tactical control point, which allowed freedom of movement for Coalition and ISF to push combat power into the fight at any given time.

"I think the IA did very well during the incidents," Brown said. "They manned their checkpoints and didn't run and leave. They did what they thought was right."

**"The Iraqi Army withstood enemy contact and helped secure key terrain during the conflict."**

The attacks set by the criminal elements were very complex, to say the least, said Henry, adding that he believes the special groups set themselves up around the Kadhamiyah Shrine and set up boundaries around them as their defensive perimeter.

The terrorists used explosively formed projectiles as a protective barrier on the outside perimeter, he added, hoping Coalition and ISF would cross their outer boundary, at which point they would come under attack from EFPs and other explosives, with RPGs and small-arms fire used as their inner perimeter security.

However, that was not the case.

"We smacked them pretty good," said Henry.

"We were very careful not to push into their perimeter."

As a result of the damage inflicted on the criminal forces, Henry said he believes they have either left town or gone into hiding, which is allowing life to get back to normal in Kadhamiyah.

Local citizens are once again moving throughout the area, and the shops are open. The markets are not as busy as they usually are, which is understandable because the people are still a bit apprehensive.

Iraqi Army soldiers will continue to man checkpoints in Kadhamiyah to deter any enemy combatants from entering the area as the daily lives of the people return to normal, said Brown.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

An Iraqi Army Soldier looks through his binoculars while pulling security from his Humvee at a checkpoint in Kadhamiyah April 1. Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces continue to maintain a presence in Kadhamiyah after fighting broke in the area. Local citizens are moving throughout the area, shopping and carrying on with their daily lives.





## 35th Eng. Bde.

# MND-B CG presents 6 impact Bronze Star Medals to 768th Eng. Bn. Soldiers

**By Capt. Patrick Jenkins**  
769th Eng. Bn., 35th Eng. Bde.

Camp Liberty, Iraq – It had been only a few hours since the Soldiers of 769th Engineer Battalion, 35th Engineer Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, returned from the monumental task of installing approximately 130,000-square feet of rocket-propelled grenade fencing and sniper-screen material over a 1,200 foot distance, with heights measuring up to 40 feet, at Joint Security Station Ur in the Sadr City district of Baghdad to veil the aerostat and its docking station.

Unbeknown to them this morning, with most of them receiving very little sleep, would be the surprise of a lifetime as Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, the commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division and MND-B, took a moment from his packed schedule April 12 to honor six of the battalion's Soldiers for their accomplishments as he presented them with impact Bronze Star Medals.

Perhaps General George C. Marshall, who wrote in a memorandum to President Franklin P. Roosevelt, wrote it best: "The fact that the ground troops, Infantry in particular, lead miserable lives of extreme discomfort and are the ones who must close in personal combat with the enemy, makes the maintenance of their moral of great importance."

Thus, it signifies the appropriateness of the presentation of the impact Bronze Stars to the Soldiers of the 769th Eng. Bn.

"The sniper screen will enable us to protect Soldiers and provide us the ability to see and disrupt

insurgents," said Hammond. "Do you realize what they did? asked Hammond. "They put up this screen under fire, day and night, and under terrible conditions. You have something to talk about a couple of years from now."

Indeed, the Soldiers would have something to speak about.

"The mission took 13 days to complete despite several setbacks caused by high winds, indirect fire or enemy small-arms fire directed at crews as they worked suspended at heights up to 40 feet in the air," said Capt. James Hoover, native of Ponchatoula, La. "Although the mission presented challenges, these Engineers lived up to the regimental motto: 'Let Us Try!'"

Soldiers presented the Bronze Star Medal for their achievements were: Staff Sgt Stephen Choat, a native of Denham Springs, La.; Staff Sgt Lee Given, a native of Flatwoods, W.V.; Sgt Shawn Griffith, a native of Richwood, W.V.; Spc Raymond Myers, a native of Vienna, W.V.; Spc Jasper Stull, a native of Durbin, WV.; and Spc Zachary Whitlatch, a native of Walker, W.V.

As the presentation drew to a close, the words from Luke 14:28 seemed to resonate through for all that have been in harms way: "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost."

The Soldiers placed their lives on the line to accomplish this important mission, and Hammond proudly thanked the team for their bravery and service to their nation.



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Patrick Jenkins, 769th Eng. Bn., 35th Eng. Bde.

Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, the commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad, presents an impact Bronze Star Medal to Spc. Zachary Whitlatch, a native of Flatwoods, W.V. Whitlatch, who serves with 769th Engineer Battalion, 35th Engineer Brigade, was one of six of the battalion's Soldiers recognized for their hard work and dedication in installing approximately 130,000-square feet of rocket-propelled grenade fencing and sniper-screen material.



## 2nd SCR



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Dustin Weidman, 1st Bn., 21st Inf. Regt., 2nd SCR

## Prepare to move out

BAGHDAD – First Lt. William Zielinski, a Fairfield, Conn., native, who serves as a platoon leader for the Reconnaissance Platoon, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment "Gimlets," 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, goes over notes April 6 for an upcoming patrol in Abu Ghraib, west of Baghdad, with Capt. Stephen Brown, a Seattle, Wash., native, who serves as the company commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn., 21st Inf. Regt.



## Task Force XII



# Apache maintainers crank up maintenance to keep up with 'frequent flyer miles'

By Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton  
Task Force XII PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – It's a domino effect of sorts. A sudden spike in violence in Basra and Baghdad meant more Soldiers on the ground quickly found themselves involved in kinetic operations.

Kinetic operations on the ground meant more AH-64 attack helicopter pilots in the air. For a two-week period, the pilots of Task Force XII found themselves engaging enemy fighters with precision lethal force – and pushing their aircraft to the limits in the process.

"It's what we all expected coming to Iraq," said Lt. Col. Charles Bowery, brigade executive officer, and an Apache pilot who, like many other pilots, was pressed into flying more hours to sustain the increase in tempo. "I think the greatest strain (with the increased number of aircraft flying) is on the maintenance side of the house."

The maintainers, working quietly in the shadows of a highly publicized flurry of activity, say they definitely feel the effects. And while the violence in the streets has quelled considerably, the effects of increased flight hours still linger in the aircraft hangars.

"We work two 12-hour shifts," said Pfc. Jemario Laurie, a Columbia, S.C., native, who serves as an aircraft maintainer with Troop T, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. "Usually, either in the morning or at night, the shifts kind of merge while we get caught up."

Most of the increased maintenance is routine for the aircraft. All helicopters have scheduled maintenance, but as the hours increase, so does the frequency of the schedule.

But like any vehicle, the more you fly a helicopter, the



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Brandon Little, TF XII PAO

Pfc. Jemario Laurie (top), a Columbia, S.C., native, reaches for a tool to help reassemble an AH-64 Apache Longbow attack helicopter April 7. Laurie is an aviation maintainer assigned to Task Force XII's Troop T, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. He, along with his fellow maintainers, have been very busy in the past few weeks as more frequent attack helicopter missions in MND-B have led to more maintenance needs.

more likely it is that a part is going to need replacement.

"It's a different kind of maintenance," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Gunderson, a maintenance supervisor from Pasco, Wash. "These guys are used to preventive maintenance. It's changed some to actually fixing stuff."

Gunderson, also part of Troop T, 4-3 ACR, is on his third

what I do is so important means a lot."

The dominos haven't stopped falling yet. For the time being, the tempo remains high as aerial weapons teams continue to patrol the skies over Baghdad.

The pilots insist that it's exactly what they expected. The maintainers say they're just as ready.

deployment to Iraq. He said he's used to the aircraft he's worked on seeing more action. The challenge for him, he said, has been getting the newer Soldiers ready during the relative calm in the months leading up to the spike of activity.

"The busier you get, the less time you have to talk to them about the importance of the work they do and the impact of what's happening," he said.

"That's when we hope that what we've said before actually sank in."

The maintainers do take the time to look at the big picture. Every week, the troop commander and first sergeant brief the Soldiers to ensure they let the wrench-turners know exactly where these aircraft have been and what they've been doing. A quick glance at a dry-erase board in the hangar lets any member of the ground crews know how many missions their aircraft have flown and how many enemies were destroyed as a result.

"I'm very proud to have a part in the impact of these Apaches," said Laurie. "I'm still relatively new to the unit, so knowing that



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Andrew Erford, Task Force XII

## Learning lay of land

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Sgt. 1st Class Alonzo Fielder, a native of Weatherford, Texas, shows Sgt. Courtney Canterbury a native of Killeen, Texas, the controls of an AH-64 Apache helicopter April. Both Soldiers are members of 4th "Longknife" Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. Prior to his tour, Canterbury reenlisted in the cockpit of the helicopter.





An Iraqi Army soldier with the 3rd Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, pulls security while on a combined patrol in the Abu Ghraib Market April 9 with Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

# STRIKE SOLDIERS, IA PATROL ABU GHRAIB MARKET

**Story and photos by  
Sgt. James Hunter**  
*2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.*  
BAGHDAD –

As Coalition Forces move toward more of an over watch position and Iraqi Security Forces take control of the streets of Iraq, it is essential to ensure the ISF is well trained and ready to man the streets without a Coalition presence.

To do this, they must train – and the best way to ensure they truly are ready and capable is to put them out into the environment to patrol and interact with the local Iraqi citizens.

Such was the case April 9 as Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers conducted a joint, dismounted patrol in the Abu Ghraib Market with Iraqi Army soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division.

Prior to pushing out into the market, 2nd Lt. Vincent Barber, a native of Toledo, Ohio, met with his Iraqi Army counterpart to discuss the upcoming mission.

Together, they planned the route, where the vehicles would be placed and the task and purpose of the mission, said Barber, a platoon leader with 1st Platoon, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). “I don’t go in with a planned mission and say this is what we are doing,” he said.

Barber said he wanted feedback from the Iraqi lieutenant to ensure they were on the same page and that both took something away from their meeting.

“There are a lot more people coming into the market, which is good because it brings in more commerce; it keeps the money in the area rather than everyone going outwards.

**2nd Lt. Vincent Barber**  
*Toledo, Ohio  
platoon leader  
1st Bn., 320th FA Regt., 2nd BCT 101st Abn. Div.*

Afterwards, the two platoons rehearsed dismounted maneuvers and room-clearing procedures.

“We are really trying to incorporate rehearsals a lot more. We’re schooled in maneuver, and it’s a lot different than how they do it,” Barber said.

“It’s a part of the things we can bring to them; we bring a little bit more order. They are really starting to adapt to our (tactics, techniques and procedures).”

Following the rehearsals, they pushed out into the market to conduct atmospherics of the area, and interacted with the local citizens to find out if they have the basic services needed for everyday survival, said Spc. Phillips Casey, a native of Cartersville, Ga., with 1st Platoon, 1-320th FA.

“The main thing is they have (basic) services; they have water and some electricity,” Barber said.

However, and perhaps more importantly, they are happy about the security in the area brought to them by Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces, said Casey.

“We are stepping up the amount of patrols we do so they feel a lot more secure than they have in the past,” Barber said.

“There are a lot more people coming into the market, which is good because it brings in more commerce; it keeps the money in the area rather than everyone going outwards, especially in our area because it’s really a rural farm type economy so that gives them a place to bring their crops.”

More now than ever, the local citizens within the community see the faces of the Iraqi Army soldiers. Two to three times a week, Barber and his platoon conduct combined operations with the IA troops.

Their continued venture into the community is bringing the best out of them, Casey said. Often, the local children would mostly flock to the American forces patrolling the area; however, the more they make their presence known, then the more the children flock to them as well.

“They have stepped up with their professionalism. They have come a long way when it comes to dealing with the Iraqi people,” Barber said.

“(U.S. Forces) are a little more respectful when dealing with the local nationals, and I think they have picked up on our TTPs when it comes to dealing with the people – winning the (counterinsurgency battle).”

Casey said he believes the Iraqi Army is gradually improving.

“They are getting better. You can tell they are definitely a young Army,” Casey said. “We’ve been around a long time, so we’ve got a lot of military history.”



▲ Spc. Phillips Casey, a native of Cartersville, Ga., talks with a group of Iraqi children during a joint patrol with Iraqi Army soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, in the Abu Ghraib market in Baghdad April 9. Casey serves with 1st Platoon, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

◀ 2nd Lt. Vincent Barber, a native of Toledo, Ohio, patrols alongside an Iraqi Army soldier with the 3rd Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, in the Abu Ghraib market in Baghdad April 9. Barber serves as the platoon leader for 1st Platoon, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.



◀ Spc. Phillips Casey, a native of Cartersville, Ga., pulls security along side Iraqi Army soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, in the Abu Ghraib market in Baghdad April 9. Casey serves with 1st Platoon, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.



# Day in the life ...

## Up early, moving fast – all in day's work

**By Spc. Anthony Henderson**  
18th MP Bde. PAO

BAGHDAD – He does more before 9 a.m. than most people do all day! That is exactly the case with what a squad leader from the 54th Military Police Company relates to while deployed in Iraq.

Sgt. Cornealius Long, a native of Colorado Springs, Colo., along with his fellow mem-

ber of his squad, are up early and moving fast when preparing to conduct Police Transition Team duties at Forwarding Operating Base Rustamiyah, Iraq.

Long serves as a squad leader with the 54th Military Police Company, 95th MP Battalion, 18th MP Brigade, Multi-National Division Baghdad.

He is up before the sun! He gets dressed, grabs chow and heads to the company headquarters to receive an operational update on areas he will be working in. Then, it's off to the vehicle line to brief his Soldiers on their upcoming mission, which is followed by conducting precombat checks on his Soldiers and their equipment.

Once that is completed, Long and his squad are ready to roll on their day's mission, heading off to an Iraqi Police station to complete a multitude of Police Transition Team tasks in order to help the Iraqi Police be-

come a more capable security force – one that is able to enforce the rule of law while protecting their citizens.

At approximately 9 a.m., when the average person starts his daily job, he and his team are already rolling.

"I enjoy my job as a squad leader the most because I have more influence on how things are run and play out," said Long. "I try to get my team switched out and 'up to speed' on every aspect of our missions because I want them to feel some relevance and importance to what we're doing."

During their convoy to their destination, which was the Al Rashad, Iraqi Police Station, Long continuously checked in with his gunner and other team leaders as they scanned their sectors for improvised-explosive devices or anything else that may have interfered with their travels to arrive safely at their mission destination.

Once at the station, Long and his squad secured the area and began to advise, assess and conduct their PTT mission at the Al Rashad Police Station.

His duties are to oversee operations conducted for the police station. The station consists of more than 180 IPs, with a dozen or so patrol cars.

The station manages basic community policing as well as detention operations.

Frequently, the Iraqi Police station commander and Long hold a meeting to discuss the status of various reports while getting updates on weekly missions carried out by the station.

Recently, after arriving at the Al Rashad Police Station, the station commander informed Long and his squad that the IPs working a patrol earlier in the day had come across an improvised-explosive device and an unexploded ordnance device.

Upon detection of the items, the IPs secured the munitions, brought it back to the

station and notified Baghdad Eagle, which is an Iraqi explosive-ordnance disposal team of the munitions.

Although it was an unexpected task for the day, Long was ready and able to adjust to the mission.

"At times on mission, our Soldiers are thrown curve balls, and this was a day Long had to adjust to a curve ball thrown his way," said 1st Lt. Russell Langford, executive officer, 54th MP Co. "Long is very good at adjusting to missions that are thrown at him. These curve balls don't shake him."

Because of his ability to adjust, Long is one of the strongest squad leaders in the company, added Langford.

Long had the IPs transport the munitions to a secure location and refocused his squad to cordon off the area to ensure the munitions were destroyed properly and safely. He also notified EOD of the situation, which resulted in an EOD team being dispatched to assist in the disposal of the munitions.

"I am glad to see that the IPs were doing their job effectively, keeping the citizens out of harms way with their finding and disposing of harmful munitions," said Long. "There has been fairly significant progress made from my first deployment and now."

Long has been deployed to Iraq three times since the war began in 2003. Each time, he said, he has seen progress by the IPs.

"When I was here during my first deployment, it was very unorganized and required a lot of overwatch from us. My second deployment seemed as if operations were in their infant stages as far as the Iraqi Police conducting patrols and basic police work," said Long. "Now, the IPs have a basic understanding of their jobs and have the basic policing skills down."

Once the IP station commander and Long completed their duties for the day, Long and his squad were ready to begin their journey back to base.

Upon their arrival, they refueled the trucks and the Soldiers were released and free to use the computers, call their Families, or just relax and unwind before their next mission, he said.

But for Long, the day was not over as he headed out to report to his headquarters to provide a situation report on his squads days activities.

Long, who has filled every position on the team, such as gunner, driver and team leader, said he feels his experience is a key factor to being able to accomplish his mission and make sure his Soldiers grasp the relevance of the missions they are part of.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Anthony Henderson, 18th MP Bde. PAO

Sgt. Cornealius Long, a native of Colorado Springs, Colo., prepares his protective gear prior to going on a mission at Al Rashad Iraqi Police Station March 15. Long's duties are to oversee operations conducted for the station. The station consists of more than 180 IPs with a dozen or so patrol cars.



# Computer systems NCO helps others through 'Pay It Forward' philosophy

**By Sgt. Brandon Little**

Task Force XII PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Staff Sgt. Steven Atlas has tried to live by one philosophy – Pay It Forward. The basic principle of this creed is simple: if he helps you, then in return, you should try to help someone else.

The exact title of this philosophy may have come from a movie made a few years ago, but his actions and the people they impact are real.

Atlas grew up in a single-parent home. At an early age, he was forced to become an adult faster than many of his friends.

"My mom and dad separated when I was really young, so my mom had to raise me and my three sisters without any help," said Atlas, a computer systems maintainer in Company C, 412th Aviation Support Battalion. "Being brought up in a predominantly female household meant that I had to play the role of big brother, and sometimes dad, to my sisters. This was something that a lot of my friends didn't have to experience and helped me to mature at an early age."

Being forced into this role wasn't the biggest obstacle that he would face as a young man; he was also forced to watch as two of his sisters lost their battles with cancer.

"My older sister passed away when I was in junior high, and my younger sister passed away when I was going into my freshman year of high school," said Atlas, a native of Chicago.

"Having to help take care of my sisters while they were dealing with the chemotherapy and being hospitalized so much, forced me to look at things in a more adult perspective. I was never that kid who was just able to sit back and play video games or just go outside and play whenever I wanted."

Taking care of his sisters, he said, was something that motivated him to do better in life instead of getting sucked into the trouble found throughout his neighborhood.

"Growing up on the Southside of Chicago, I learned that if you weren't careful you could easily find yourself in a bad situation," said Atlas. "I think I owed it to my mom, if not

myself, to be the first one of her children to graduate from high school and go on to do something positive because she saw so much bad stuff throughout her life."

After graduating from high school, he chose to put his goal of joining the military on hold to help support his Family while his mother went back to school to get a degree. He got a job working in a restaurant owned by his uncle to help support his mother and youngest sister.

"Once she completed her degree, I went to her and said 'This is my time. I want to join the Army, and I feel this is my time to do it,'" said Atlas. "She didn't want me joining at that time because it was (during the peak) of Desert Shield/Desert Storm; I told her that there was never a 'good time' to join because the Army's job is to fight wars and if you're not fighting, you're training to fight."

His mother earned a bachelor's degree in sociology and worked as counselor helping unwed teenage mothers in Chicago for many years ... paying it forward.

When Atlas joined the Army, he first joined as a laboratory technician but later became a signal Soldier.

"Ever since I was a little kid, I always wanted to join the military; I just didn't know which branch to join," he said. "Talking with Army recruiters helped me make that choice."

Throughout his 16 years in the military, he has tried to continue to live by his "pay it forward" principle. He tries to provide Soldiers with not only knowledge from his career but also from his religion.

"I've had some ups and downs being a of Islam faith, especially during 9/11, because many people tried to categorize all Muslims with the ones who carried out those attacks," said Atlas, who is now married with three children. "I think I've been able to change those beliefs in many of the people I have come across by giving Islamic cultural awareness classes and letting them know what we do and what we believe as opposed to what they have seen on TV."

"After I found out about his religious background, I asked him to give a class to the Soldiers, and he was really excited about doing it," said Task Force XII Command Sgt. Maj. H. Lee Kennedy, who is also one of Atlas' mentors.

The Soldiers who attended that class got more information about Islamic cultures and are able tell their friend the difference between a regular person of Islamic faith and an Islamic extremist ... paying it forward

"He's a very eager and understanding young man, and it's a pleasure to guide him," said Kennedy. "Leadership in units may come and go, and won't affect the unit too much; but when Soldiers like Atlas leave units, everyone loses out."

In addition to Kennedy, Atlas also considers his roommate, Sgt. Archie Martin, to be a mentor and close friend.

Atlas "is an outstanding noncommissioned officer who is very knowledgeable and caring," said Martin, also a computer systems maintainer in Company C and a native of Montgomery, Ala.

"He has really helped me learn more about my job and how to be a better Soldier."

Martin, an AH-64D Longbow Apache maintainer by Military Occupational Specialty, uses his spare time to help Soldiers who work long hours fixing Apaches ... paying it forward.

With more than 40 years of experience in life, Atlas also tries to spread some of his knowledge and lessons learned in life to anyone in need of guidance.

"If I do something good for one or two people, it will let them see that there are still people out there doing good things; and in turn, maybe they'll do good thing," said Atlas.

There are plenty of people around the world doing bad things, said Atlas, now it's time to find people who want to go out there and help people for one thing in return ... Pay It Forward.



**Staff Sgt. Steven Atlas**  
computer systems maintainer  
Co. C, 412th ASB, TF XII

# MND-B Soldier turns life around by signing up

**By Sgt. Jerome Bishop**

2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Every Soldier has a different reason for enlisting to be in the Army. Some do it for patriotic reasons, others for help paying for college, but one Multi-National Division – Baghdad Non-commissioned Officer signed up in 2005 for an entirely different purpose.

Before enlisting, Sgt. Wyatt Karney, an Albuquerque native who serves as a mortarman and Personal Security Detachment NCO with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, MND-B, led a life of hard work, shared custody of a child and an unwanted drug problem.

"I decided to join the Army because I had a drug addiction and I had to get out of my home town," said Karney who now calls Colorado Springs, Colo., home.

Karney's addiction cost him his Family. It ended his marriage and resulted in shared custody of his son.

"At the time we were divorced and I had



**Sgt. Wyatt Karney**  
mortarman  
HHT, 2nd Sqdn., 14th Cav. Regt.,  
2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

joint custody of my son, I tried to get off drugs several times for years and couldn't do it," he said.

For Karney, the worst was telling his son.

"He didn't ever see it, but I would explain to him that I had a drug problem and he didn't notice it, but I just got sick of myself," he added.

Karney said he decided he had to leave the town where he was born and raised so he could rid himself of his addiction.

"I have close Family members and a lot of friends who are involved with drugs and I had to get away from it."

The call to serve came, as it did with many Soldiers, when the attacks on New York and Washington happened Sept. 11, 2001. Even though he felt the call to duty, it was several years before he enlisted.

"I wanted to join when the towers fell on 9/11, but because I had joint custody of my son, I didn't want to leave him," he said.

Karney said he would join if there was a chance he would defend his country.

"I've always liked the military, but I never wanted to join unless there was a conflict going on. I didn't want to just join and do garrison stuff," he said. "My grandfather served in WWII and my father served in Vietnam, and I wanted to serve only if there some kind of war going on."

In the end, his close relationship to his son eventually led him to leave.

Two weeks after he pledged his commitment to the Army, Karney said goodbye to his son and headed toward a new life in the Army.

"I'm kind of a perfectionist," he said. "Even though a lot of people said I was a good dad, I knew I could do better, and I didn't want to keep myself down and not be the best dad I could be so I needed the change."

Since enlisting, Karney was able to clean up his life.

He credits being away from his hometown and the people associated with his drug problems, as well as the Army's no tolerance stand on drug use as reasons for his success in getting sober.

Today, Karney is contributing to the mission of providing security on a routine basis for the commander of the squadron in which he serves.

"Many Soldiers in my command have long histories. What makes the Army great is it is not about what you have done in the past, it is how you carry yourself into the future that truly matters," said Capt. Ken Bernier, a Garland, Maine, native who serves as the commander of HHT, 2nd Squadron, 14th Cav. Regt. "Sgt. Karney is a reliable member of my team, who can be depended on to be a rifleman, vehicle commander and a proficient mortarman."

Back home, his son is waiting for his return, but he is not waiting alone. There is another member of Karney's Family who waits for him. He said she was instrumental in him turning his life around.

The woman Karney speaks so highly of is his ex-wife, who he remarried in 2007.

"I didn't have a squared away mind to be able to deal with things that she was going through, but she dealt with her stuff and I dealt with mine while we were separated and we've both grown a lot so we decided to get back together," he said.

After his four years of service are up and his duty fulfilled, Karney hopes to one day take a job as a government employee in Colorado Springs. Until then, he's sure to continue to fight the good fight, both against the enemy in Iraq and against the ghosts of a former addition.



# MND-B Soldiers become American citizens

## 4th Inf. Div. Soldiers earn U.S. citizenship

**Story and photo by Sgt. Jason Thompson**  
**MND-B PAO**  
BAGHDAD – “*You’ve studied, worked hard and sacrificed and now you are citizens of the United States of America. Congratulations. America’s a welcoming society. We welcome not only immigrants like you, but the many gifts you bring, and the values you live by – hard work, entrepreneurship, love for Family, and love of country. Attaining your citizenship is a defining event in your life. Today, America is not only your home; it’s your country. With a single oath, all at once you became as fully American as the most direct descendants of the founding fathers.*”

These are words that echoed throughout the main corridor from a recorded speech by President George W. Bush, congratulating the new citizens of the United States of American after they proudly recited the oath of citizenship.

Standing under a glittering chandelier, along with 255 of their fellow service members, were four Soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division’s Special Troops Battalion. They gathered April 12 into the marble hall of Saddam Hussein’s former Al Faw Palace, took the oath of citizenship – and left as American citizens.

The congregation vowed to "support and defend the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America against all enemies," an abstract promise with an even deeper meaning here as the Soldiers chose to endure the same sacrifices as their fellow comrades in arms to preserve the freedom of a land that was not yet fully theirs, said Lt. Gen. Lloyd Austin III, commander, Multi-National Corps – Iraq.

“Our nation’s unique quality is that it weaves the world’s cultures into a great American tapestry, and our military benefits from their strengths,” said Austin. “Thank you all for sacrificing so much for the United States and for the Iraqi people.”

The ceremony was a momentous event in the lives of each of the participants of the ceremony as each individual’s story of why, when and how they migrated to the United States in search of peace, freedom and the Ameri-

can dream.  
“This is a great day for me,” said Spc. Muorwel Malual, 31, a linguist with STB, who also said that he migrated to Denver at the age of 26 in search of safety while his home country of Sudan was involved in a civil war.

Malual said after living in America for about three years, he wanted to give back to the country and people of America, who had welcomed him with open arms.

“I was proud before to serve in the American military,” said Malual. “I was proud to stand up for my neighbors, who had welcomed me into their country, and now I am proud to say that I am a citizen of the same country.”

Spc. Assegid Mekonen, 25, a personnel security crew-member with STB, followed in his older brother’s footsteps when he migrated from Ethiopia in November 2004 to live with his brother in Tacoma, Md., in search of a better life.

“My brother moved to America about 10 years before me, and he helped a lot when I moved,” said Mekonen.

“I was happy just living in America and living with my brother. Now, I can say that I am an American, and I look forward to the many opportunities that I will have as a result.”

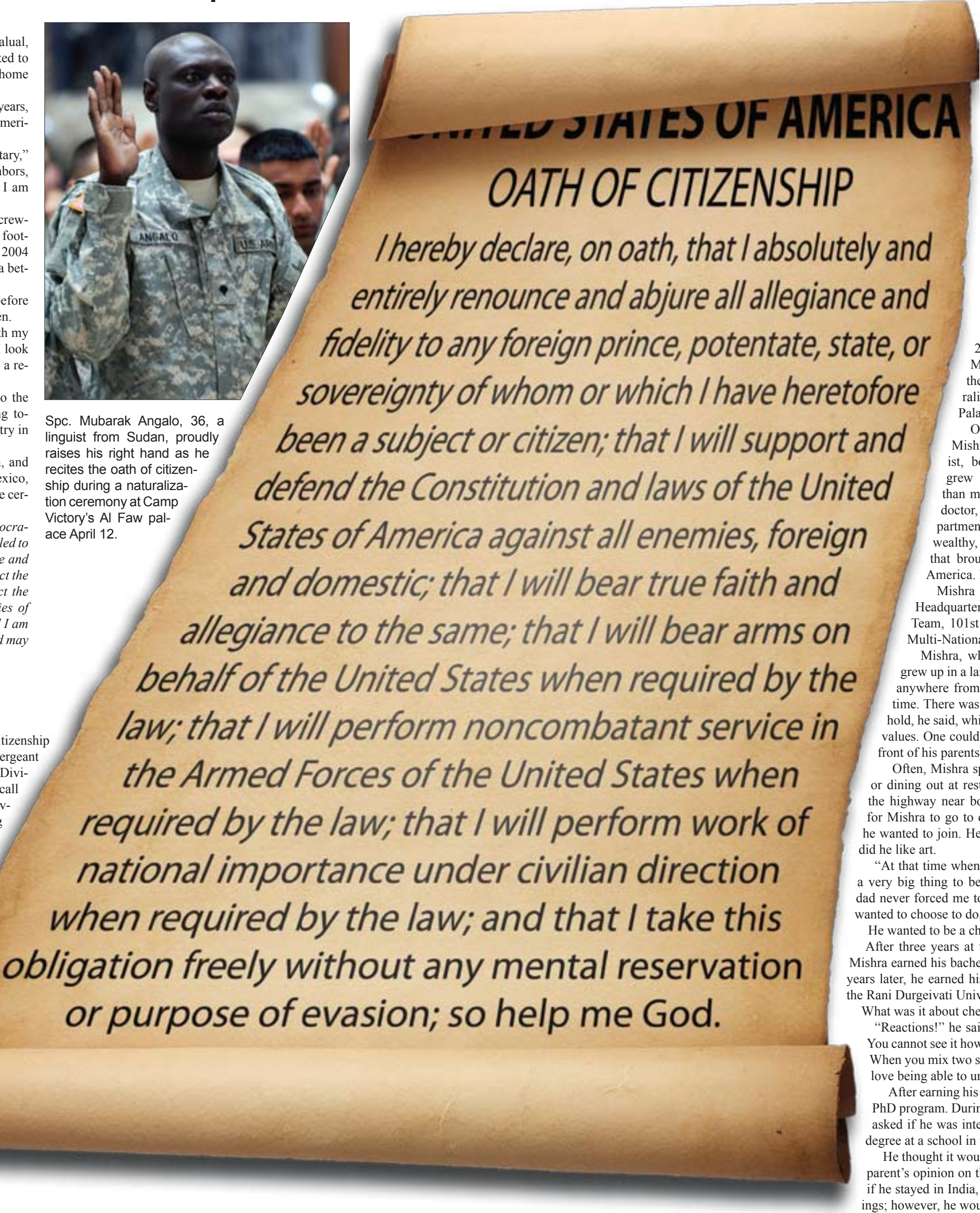
Mekonen also said he is most looking forward to the ability to vote in upcoming elections and is looking towards a reenlistment to continue serving for the country in which he now a citizen.

Spc. Mubarak Angalo, 36, a linguist from Sudan, and Pfc. Estela Calvillo, 20, a supply specialist from Mexico, both with STB, also gained their citizenship during the ceremony.

“*You’re now an important part of American democracy,*” concluded President Bush’s speech. “*You’re entitled to the full promise of American life; equal rights, justice and opportunity. You’ve also made a commitment to respect the laws of this land, to support your country, to respect the rights of others, and to live up to the responsibilities of citizens. I am proud that you are now Americans and I am honored to be your President. May God bless you, and may God bless America.*”



Spc. Mubarak Angalo, 36, a linguist from Sudan, proudly raises his right hand as he recites the oath of citizenship during a naturalization ceremony at Camp Victory’s Al Faw palace April 12.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Brandon Little, TF XII PAO

Two hundred fifty nine service members, from 71 countries, meet together April 12 to culminate their quests to become U.S. citizens during a Multi-National Corps – Iraq naturalization ceremony at Camp Victory.

## From life in India to U.S. military ... 101st Abn. Div. Soldier ‘Seeing the world’

**By Sgt. James Hunter**  
**2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Nearly 200 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines serving in Iraq received their U.S. citizenship during a naturalization ceremony at the Al Faw Palace April 12.

One particular citizen, Spc. Vivek Mishra, a chemical operations specialist, born and raised in central India, grew up in a rather different lifestyle than most would think. His father was a doctor, serving at the head of India’s Department of Pharmacy. He grew up rather wealthy, with no stories of famine or war that brought him to the United States of America. Rather, it was his studies.

Mishra serves with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Mishra, who carries a heavy Indian accent, grew up in a large household, which would house anywhere from 25 – 40 Family members at one time. There was a lot of respect among the household, he said, which strived on family and religious values. One could not even do as much as smoke in front of his parents, for it was a sign of disrespect.

Often, Mishra spent time with his friends at clubs or dining out at restaurants, which sat on the side of the highway near bodies of water. When it was time for Mishra to go to college, he knew exactly the field he wanted to join. He felt he was not good at math nor did he like art.

“At that time when I was in India, they considered it a very big thing to be a doctor,” Mishra said, “but my dad never forced me to do anything. He said whatever I wanted to choose to do, do it.”

He wanted to be a chemist.

After three years at the Government Science College, Mishra earned his bachelor’s degree. Then, less than three years later, he earned his master’s degree in Chemistry at the Rani Durgavati University in Jabalpur, India.

What was it about chemistry that Mishra enjoyed?

“Reactions!” he said. “In chemistry, I love reactions. You cannot see it how it changes into another substance. When you mix two substances, it will have a reaction. I love being able to understand those things.”

After earning his master’s degree, Mishra joined the PhD program. During his studies, he said his professor asked if he was interested in getting another master’s degree at a school in the United States.

He thought it would be a good choice but wanted his parent’s opinion on the matter first. His father told him if he stayed in India, he would just know his surroundings; however, he would not know the real world.

Mishra arrived in the United States in 2002 and enrolled at Illinois State University to work toward another master’s degree in chemistry. He was nearly complete with his degree, he said, with one semester left and 80 percent of his thesis done, when he decided he needed to take a break from school for a while.

He was recently married, and said he didn’t make much money working as a graduate assistant at the university. He had to put college aside to provide for him and his wife.

He worked a numerous jobs, but never really found his true calling. He said he wanted to work in a lab as a chemist, mixing different substances.

“At that time I said, ‘Well, I do not have this much patience to continue to look for a job,’” he recalled.

After seeing an article on recruitment, he decided the next best thing for him would be the military.

But what did his parents think? Well, chuckled Mishra, he didn’t tell his parents until he graduated from Advanced Individual Training – where he became a chemical operations specialist.

“They were in shock,” he said.

His mother didn’t want him to join the military; however, they understood he wanted to make a difference. His mother thought that no matter where he was as a Soldier, he explained, she worried that a bullet would find him. Thankfully, that has not been the case.

Mishra said being in the military is his true calling. “I will be in the Army for about 20 to 25 years, as long as my body permits it,” he said. “Its like a big Family. It’s a big mental support. I have made a lot of changes within myself.”

When growing up, he said he wasn’t given orders but simply given the choice if he wanted to do something or not.

“I have learned responsibility and order,” he explained.

With already knowing he wants to be a career Soldier, his next goal in his career is to become an officer in the chemical field.

“War is completely changing, but chemicals are still an issue,” Mishra said. “The chemical corps is growing, and they need really good Soldiers to understand all these things.”

He said he wants to maximize his abilities with chemicals in relation to the military. In the meantime, however, he will first soak in his new status as an American citizen.

“It’s completely different now to be an American citizen – it’s a good feeling,” Mishra said. “Now I am on the same track as everyone. I don’t think anyone treated me differently because I wasn’t a citizen, but it’s a mental thing.”

Becoming an American citizen is an honor he is well deserving of, said Capt. Robert Woodruff, his commander.

“Specialist Mishra exemplifies all that is good in an American Soldier, even before he officially became a U.S. citizen,” said Woodruff. “He’s been through a roller coaster ride for the two years to get to this culminating point in his life. He is technically and tactically proficient in his skills as the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear expert in the company, routinely filling the shoes of a noncommissioned officer on a daily basis.

“He definitely deserves this”

## TF XII troops become citizens

**By Sgt. Brandon Little**  
**Task Force XII PAO**

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – The dream of becoming a U.S. citizen finally became a reality for several Task Force XII Soldiers after a Multi-National Corps – Iraq naturalization ceremony held at Camp Victory April 12.

The ceremony was conducted in the lavish Al-Faw Palace, and 259 service members, from all branches of the military, officially became U.S. citizens.

“I can’t think of a better use of the Al-Faw Palace than to naturalize fellow servicemen and women fighting in support of the United States of America,” said Lt. Gen. Lloyd Austin III, the commander of MNC-I. “Saddam Hussein built this palace to celebrate his victory over Iran in regaining the Faw Peninsula; and today, we use it to celebrate our brothers and sisters gaining their citizenship.”

The Oath of Citizenship was administered to the service members, who came from 71 different countries, by John Lafferty, the director of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

After the oath was administered, each of the newly naturalized service members received a Certificate of Naturalization.

Thanks to all the hard work and effort put forth by the USCIS team, the event marked the largest naturalization ceremony ever held outside the United States, said Austin.

Staff Sgt. Maranata Temese, who was born in Western Samoa, was one of the Task Force XII Soldiers who became a citizen during the ceremony.

“It was a great honor for me to receive my citizenship during this deployment,” said Temese, a platoon sergeant in Company G, Task Force XII, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. “The feeling you get when they call your name, and you become a citizen, just makes everything we’re doing (here in Iraq) worth fighting for – especially when you turn around and look at the faces of your fellow (service members) standing there to support you.”

Soldiers who desire to become citizens during their deployment need to begin the process at their unit legal offices as soon as possible, said Sgt. Aaron Simeraro, a paralegal specialist in Task Force XII.

Before the ceremony concluded, the new U.S. citizens recited the Pledge of Allegiance and listened to a message from President George Bush.

“For all of you, the Oath of Citizenship is more than a formality; and today, America is more than your home – it’s your country,” said Bush. “This is one of the things that makes our country so unique; with a single oath, all at once, you become as fully American as the most direct descendant of a founding father.”



# MND-B route-clearance Soldier leads from front

**Pfc. April Campbell**

MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – When Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers conduct missions out in sector, they pay close attention, watching and searching for signs of improvised-explosive devices.

Soldiers conducting route-clearance patrols have one primary mission when going outside the wire: to search for and help rid the streets of IEDs; they help ease the burden and provide extra security for those who follow in their paths later that day.

When platoons conduct such missions, a single Soldier drives a one-man vehicle known as a Huskey in front of the convoy. These drivers must recognize and react appropriately when they see IEDs – risking their own lives to protect the Soldiers behind them.

One Soldier who took on this mission was Spc. Adam Rife, who serves as a Huskey driver with the 3rd Platoon, 84th Engineer Company, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Rife, who volunteered to continue driving the vehicle after his initial two-month tour was complete, has found six IEDs over the past five months. While his platoon first provided support out of Camp Taji, they now operate out of Camp Liberty.

“I volunteered to drive the vehicle when we were in Taji,” said the San Luis Obispo, Calif., native. “I just felt more comfortable being up there where I can see everything.”

From his vantage point, Rife acts as a vital and mission-essential set of eyes for his platoon leader, 1st Lt. Eric Schnee, a native of Auburn, Ala., who also serves with the 3rd Pltn., 64th Eng. Co., 2nd SCR.

“There have been numerous occasions where I could not tell anything was there from where I was,” said Schnee. “Next thing I know, Rife’s on the radio saying ‘I have an IED.’ I think he’s one of the main reasons that we’ve been so successful.”

Rife, who trained in a Stryker vehicle prior to deploying to Iraq, said he received all of his training driving a Huskey after he arrived in Iraq. One of his most important teachers has been experience.

“One of the first two IEDs I found was ... when I was working at Camp Taji,” Rife said.

Learning from this find, Rife said he

had a better idea of what to look for when he went on route-clearance missions.

“From that point on, I was looking for the human touch – the little details where you can tell that something was done there with intent,” he added.

With a key mission of protecting others, driving a Huskey is challenging, both technically and mentally.

Staff Sgt. Roy Freeman, an Astoria, Ore., native, who serves as Rife’s squad leader and the acting platoon sergeant with the 3rd Pltn., 84th Eng. Co., 2nd SCR, recognizes the difficulties the Huskey drivers face during their missions.

“With the Huskey, you’re out in front of the whole patrol. It’s cramped. It’s constantly scanning for IEDs,” Freeman said. “If you call something out clear, and it turns out to be an IED, then you’ve got that on your conscience.”

“Mentally,” added Freeman, “it’s probably the hardest job in the patrol.”

In spite of the stress it might appear to cause, Rife uses the increased responsibility to motivate him to excel at his position.

“Knowing that everything’s at stake – the lives of the Soldiers behind me and those of the patrols that come after us – helps me keep my focus,” he said.

Although he recently rotated out of his position as a Huskey driver, Rife, who will be promoted to the rank of sergeant and become a team leader soon, plans to use his experience to help him better lead the Soldiers whom he will be responsible for in the future.

“What I’ve learned by just being a driver,” he said, “(the Soldiers I will lead) can learn before they become drivers themselves. I think you need to know your Soldiers’ jobs in order to better lead them.”

While not quite yet a noncommissioned officer, Rife continues to be proactive from the Stryker vehicle he now occupies. He passes on his knowledge and assists the new rotation of Soldiers who operate the Huskey in their endeavors to secure the streets of Baghdad.



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. April Campbell, MND-B PAO

Spc. Adam Rife, a San Luis Obispo, Calif., native, stands in front of Huskey outside the 68th Engineer Company headquarters at Camp Liberty April 9. Rife spent five months leading his platoon in the one-man vehicle during route-clearance patrols and helped search for improvised-explosive devices on the streets of Baghdad. He serves with the 3rd Platoon, 84th Eng. Co., 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

## Raider Soldiers keep physically, mentally fit for new environment

**By Spc. David Hodge**

1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq – As the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, arrives at Forward Operating Base Falcon in Baghdad’s Rashid district, the U.S. Army’s greatest asset, Soldiers, are forced to adhere to a new standard in living conditions.

The “Raider” Brigade joined forces with Multi-National Division – Baghdad in March for its mission to assist the Government of Iraq and provide security and stability for the 1.2 million residents in the district.

Soldiers on and off the base work hard to achieve this by staying physically and mentally fit during their 15-month deployment.

“There are a number of measures Soldiers take to stay safe in this new, harsh environment,” said Bob Topolewski, Raider Brigade Safety Officer.

“I call it mastering the environment,” he

added. “Because if Soldiers don’t, the environment will master them.”

Iraq is a dusty, hot environment, and Soldiers must make every effort to maintain situational awareness in this climate, said Topolewski.

Soldiers can achieve this by following a few rules, such as eating properly, staying hydrated, and getting the appropriate amount of rest.

“I don’t give Soldiers tips regarding safety,” stated Topolewski, a native of Savannah, Ga. “I give them the standard operating procedures.”

“This is the best way, based on our experience, to keep Soldiers safe in this environment.”

Topolewski said that many Soldiers lose attentiveness at some point during deployments, and some of the seasoned combat veterans might become complacent.

Soldiers must maintain situational awareness and look to their chain of command for

guidance to battle complacency, he added.

“A safety program is only as effective as the noncommissioned officers in the unit make it,” Topolewski explained.

Soldiers entering this new environment should pay attention to their surroundings and conduct pre-combat checks and inspections on all equipment, said Staff Sgt. Charles Vincent, a topographic analyst from Lampasas, Texas, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

For Soldiers to sustain an acceptable level of mental and physical fitness, they must remain hydrated by drinking water.

“I need water to keep moving,” said Sgt. Dustin Cole, a topographic analyst from Oberlin, La., assigned to HHD, 1st BCT. “If you become dehydrated then you become complacent.”

“Hydration is important because we have yet to begin the summer months, and it keeps Soldiers mentally alert,” said Staff Sgt. Denise

Vail, medical clinic noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Company C, 4th Support Battalion, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

“I’m looking forward to helping out the Soldiers,” added Vail, who hails from Fort Hood, Texas.

Lower back pain, upper respiratory infections and dehydration are the most common problems Soldiers bring to the clinic, said Vail.

“Physical fitness is very important to accomplish the mission in Iraq,” said Staff Sgt. Aldwin McLean, an M2A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle mechanic assigned to 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Multi-National Division – Center. “It’s our edge against our enemy.”

For the last 15 months, the Raider Brigade has prepared to begin its mission in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad by training Soldiers to maintain their fitness levels in environments, such as Iraq.



# Army wives go 'on air' with talk radio

By Elizabeth Lorge

Army News Service

WASHINGTON – Every Monday night at 8 p.m. a group of Army wives gathers to hear news, relationship advice, parenting tips and deployment support, but this isn't your traditional readiness or support group.

Most of the women haven't met and don't even know each other's names. But over the Internet radio waves and blogs, "Army Wife Talk Radio" founder and host Tara Crooks tries to help Army Families and empower Army spouses.

"I just wanted to mention how much fun I had yesterday rocking out to last month's AWTR shows on my iPod! It was like doing housework with friends keeping me company," said Kim P. on the "Loving a Soldier Blog," which is run by AWTR.

"There's a common denominator that holds us all together," said Crooks, a Fort Stewart, Ga., Army wife of 10 years. Her husband just returned from Iraq and she had their second daughter during his deployment, an experience she said that she is still surprised she survived, and attributes it partly to the help of AWTR listener support.

"Part of what really makes this work sometimes is I think that I need you as much as you need me. I remember talking to Star Henderson, my business partner, when I was pregnant and I was sobbing and I said, 'Star, I'm not going to make it through this. How can I motivate people when I can't even get out of bed in the morning?' And she was like, 'You're going to do this, and you doing this is going to motivate other people.'"

Also available throughout the week via the Internet and podcast on [www.armywifetalkradio.com](http://www.armywifetalkradio.com),

AWTR celebrated its third anniversary April 7. It was born late one night while Crooks' husband was on another deployment and has grown from 37 listeners to about 1,500.

Crooks says while she once had to scramble to find guests, now experts on deployment, relationships and parenting eagerly pitch their ideas and the show is booked through July.

Dr. Gary Chapman, author of "The Five Love Languages," recently appeared, and Monday's show will feature Maj. Gen. Elder Granger,

deputy director of TRICARE, and one of TRICARE's customer-service representatives, who will be available to answer listener's questions.

"I've really had an amazing response with doctors and authors and speakers and people who want to get their word out to the military folks and

somehow -- I don't know, maybe because it's a podcast, it's grassroots, it's where all the younger spouses are right now, it's on the Internet -- we've caught on and we have that audience.

We're able to bridge the gap between these resources and this information available to these military Families and the military Families they're actually targeting and that they need to reach and a lot of times they don't," Crooks said.

She had expected most of her listeners to be fairly new Army wives who needed a source of information, but a recent viewer poll found that even experienced Army wives are tuning in.

"It's definitely a support group," she said. "Some of those girls say that their Monday night is like their date, to show up on Monday nights for live shows."

That's especially evident on the Loving a Soldier Blog, where women commiserate over extended deployments, laugh and cry over daily struggles and celebrate homecomings together.

In addition to the radio show and blog, AWTR sponsors a book club and often has give-aways on the air.

Crooks and Henderson also write columns and travel to Army posts conducting 'Field Exercises,' events teaching Army wives how to make the most of their benefits and combat problems.

"Some day I'd like to say, oh look, someone stayed in because we helped them, and we can help the retention efforts somehow and build a stronger Army. I truly believe that Army Families are the key to having a stronger Army," Crooks said.

Army Wife Talk Radio can be heard at [www.ArmWifeTalkRadio.com](http://www.ArmWifeTalkRadio.com). To participate in AWTR live shows recorded weekly on Mondays at 8pm EST, visit [www.BlogTalkRadio.com/](http://www.BlogTalkRadio.com/).



## Spouses hit road, train for Army 10-Miler while Soldiers deployed

By Laura Kaae

Fort Hood Herald

FORT HOOD, Texas – Take a peek around the 4th Infantry Division water tower any given Saturday morning and you'll find a group of chatty ladies, usually a couple of kids and sometimes a dog or two standing in a circle in the parking lot, laughing and shooting the breeze.

But you better look quick, because these women and children — all Families of deployed Soldiers — don't stand around for very long.

After a few minutes of stretching and chit-chat, the dozen or so women grab their strollers and dogs, sometimes an iPod, sometimes their favorite running buddy, and start sprinting around post — all for a purpose.

The women are running for fun, they're running for each other and they're running for their heroes who are deployed overseas.

"We're running with a purpose," said leader Tracey Mullins, just before the group was set to make their way from the water tower toward Clear Creek Road last Saturday.

"It gives us something to do on a Saturday morning," said Mullins. "The main reason we do it is for our guys."

Mullins said the running group is open to all spouses on

post of Soldiers who are of all ranks and all units.

"We're a spouse group — not a specific unit," she said. "No matter what your husband does."

All the women are training for the Army 10-Miler in October. Some will race toward the finish line; others will walk and jog, and others might just walk it, Mullins said.

As they train, the women bring their dogs and strollers and whoever else wants to tag along.

"We have it all," Mullins said with a laugh.

Right now, the group plans to send several teams to Washington, D.C., where the race will be held.

For many, October will mark just about a year after some of the Soldiers deployed.

"By running, we get in shape and lose weight," Mullins said.

"Then we're in great baby-making shape," she added with a smile.

Chrissy Segulin, whose husband is currently deployed with the 4th Infantry Division, said she runs with her husband when he's home, but has found camaraderie and accountability in the spouse group.

Segulin, who was pushing her third child for the duration of the group's Saturday run, said she's been running for 17 years.

"Running helps me be a nicer mommy," she joked. "I wanted accountability and to really support my husband."

"We're all going through the same thing," she said. "(The group) helps put me in a better mood."

And while some of the group members are experienced marathon runners, others are brand new to the sport.

Jessica Romaneski said this is the first time her husband has deployed, so she's using the time to strengthen her friendships and learn about herself. That included picking up running as a hobby.

The spouse running group, she said, plays perfectly into that.

"Everyone is very positive and encouraging," she said. "I've really enjoyed my experience so far."

Romaneski said she told her husband that when they're both running — on opposite sides of the world — she likes to imagine they are running toward each other.

"He's pretty pumped about it," she said.

As for her first deployment, Romaneski said she's coping well with all this time to herself and that the running group has helped with that.

"I feel like I've learned a lot and had a lot of personal growth time," she said. "I look forward to running with them every weekend."



# 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div. reflags as 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

**By Spc. Courtney Marulli**  
4th BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

FORT CARSON, Colo. – April 8, 2008, marked a historic day in military history when the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, cased its colors and uncased those of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

The colors of the 2nd BCT will move on to Fort Lewis, Wash. The act of reflagging as the 4th BCT meant the consolidation of the two active 12th Infantry Regiment's battalions for the first time since 1995. The 4th BCT will now carry forth the honors and traditions of the 12th Infantry Regiment.

Of the six battalions, four realigned. The 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, has become the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment. The 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery has transitioned to the 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery. Both support battalions changed as well transitioning from 2nd Brigade Support Battalion and 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion to the 704th Support Battalion and the 4th Special Troops Battalion respectfully. The 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, and the 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry, kept their names.

Maj. Gen. Mark Graham, the commanding general of Division West, First Army and Fort Carson, Colo., said transition and modulation are often spoken of or read about, but it was seen in the flesh during the reflagging ceremony of 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div., to 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"It's a bittersweet breeze as they reflag," he said. "The history of the 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div., is the history of our Army."

Graham said the 2nd BCT fought in some of the nation's most important campaigns in history.

"They continue to make a statement at every page of our history," he said.

The 2nd Infantry Division was activated on Oct. 26, 1917, in Beaumont, France. Its history is deeply rooted into that of the United States and is one highlighted by participation in historic campaigns like the Battle of Belleau-Wood, Mont Blanc and Chateau-Thierry campaign in World War I and the storming of Omaha Beach in World War II.

The 2nd BCT headquarters was positioned



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Courtney Marulli, 4th BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

Soldiers in 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, witnessed history in the making when the colors of the brigade were cased and the colors of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, were uncased and hoisted up as the new beacon for the Brigade.

in Ar Ramadi, one of the most hostile places in Iraq in November 2004. Members of the brigade fought in the Fallujah offensive and helped provide Iraqi's the opportunity to vote in the historic national elections January 2005.

When the brigade redeployed in August 2005, it transitioned to Fort Carson, Colo. In 2006, the brigade then transitioned into a modular brigade combat team, allowing for new personnel and additional capabilities.

In October 2006, the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team was called once more to Iraq after less than a year at home-station. The Soldiers of the brigade arrived in Baghdad, where they took control of some of the most violent sectors in Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Graham said the colors of a unit serve as a rally point, but it's the Soldier's and their Families that make the color of a unit.

"The Soldiers and their Families will con-

tinue on no matter what destination or insignia is on their sleeve," he said. "Be justifiably proud of your service to the nation. Be proud of who you are and your new unit. I know you will proudly wear the new patch on your sleeve."

The new patch has a rich history of its own, Graham said.

**"I will always keep the Indianhead patch in my pocket and wear my new patch with pride."**

**Col. Jeffrey Bannister**  
commander, 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

The 4th BCT was activated Dec. 1, 1975 in Fort Carson, Colo. It was then deactivated in Germany and later reactivated on Dec. 16, 2004 at Fort Hood, Texas. The 4th BCT is one of

the Army's first modular brigades.

Less than a year after reactivation, the 4th BCT deployed with 4th Inf. Div. in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07. The brigade was responsible for sectors in central and southern Baghdad. In December 2006, the brigade redeployed to Fort Hood, Texas.

Graham said to remember those of 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div., who gave the ultimate

sacrifice and can't be here to celebrate in a new page of history.

"We live in the land of the free because of the brave," he said. "Standing before us are so many of the brave."

Col. David Thompson, the rear detachment commander for 4th Infantry Division, read a message to the Soldiers of 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div., now 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div., from Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, the commanding general of 4th Infantry Division, who is currently forward deployed to Iraq.

"Even from Baghdad, my mind drifts to the Soldiers and Families," Hammond said via the letter.

Hammond said in the letter that Col. Jeffrey Bannister is a good leader as he embodies the mindset of Mission, Soldier, Family, Team.

"I know because I fought with him," Hammond said.

Col. Jeffrey Bannister, commander of 4th BCT, said this is a historic occasion and one that will always resonate in his memories.

"Some Soldiers in this brigade have served under the Indianhead patch for the better part of a decade," he said.

Bannister said a unit's success is defined by perseverance, which is something the brigade did during tours to Korea and two tours to Iraq.

"The 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div., has proven its worth to the United States in no other way a brigade combat team can," he said.

That perseverance showed when they had to change from the frozen lands of Korea to the hot desert of Iraq. The brigade also transitioned for mechanized to a light infantry unit.

"It is a proud moment to case the colors as all the units in 2nd Inf. Div. will be in one location since the start of World War II," Bannister said.

Bannister said the 4th BCT has had a good run since its inception in 2004.

"I am proud to serve under the guidon as it has proved itself worthy," he said.

Bannister said the reflagging is one of those moments in his military career that he will always remember.

"I will always keep the Indianhead patch in my pocket and wear my new patch with pride."

## Units now eligible for Combat Action Streamer

**By James Pasierb**  
Army News Service

WASHINGTON – Army units that have been deployed in support of combat operations now have a new way to be recognized: the Combat Action Streamer.

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren approved creation of the CAS on Oct. 13, for units that have served or are serving in a theater of combat operations. The award is retroactive to Sept. 18, 2001 for units meeting the criteria.

If 65 percent or more of the Soldiers in a unit have been awarded the combat action badge, then that unit can display the CAS with its distinctive flag or guidon. The qualifying percentage is based on the unit's authorized strength, Human Resource Command officials said.

For the war on terrorism, only one streamer will be authorized per unit, regardless of the number of times a unit deploys, or whether it deploys to Iraq and Afghanistan, HRC officials said.

In the future, a streamer will be awarded to a unit for each separate war or military operation in which the criteria for the award have been met., officials said.

Commanders of battalions, groups, regiments and brigades are authorized to award the CAS to companies under their commands. The award can be made during the period of military operations against an armed enemy and for one year thereafter.

During the same period, commanding generals of divisions, corps, and armies are authorized to award Combat Ac-

tion Streamers to separate platoons, detachments, battalions, groups, regiments and brigades under their command when all criteria are met.

Requirements and restrictions for displaying streamers are governed by chapter 9, Army Regulation 840-10, Flags, Guidon, Streamers, Tabards, and Automobile and Aircraft Plates, November 1, 1998. Other regulations containing award criteria are AR 600 -8-22, Military Awards, Dec. 11, 2006 and AR 870-5, Military History: Responsibilities, Policies, and Procedures, September 21, 2007.

Units are encouraged to plan and execute ceremonies for the awarding of the CAS, Army officials said, adding that they can also ask the surrounding community, including the local media, to join in the ceremony.

COMBAT ACTION (UNIT IDENTIFICATION)



# Fresh eggs available once more for MND-B Soldiers

By Spc. Aaron Rosencrans  
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq — The efforts of one Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier made it possible for deployed troops to once again enjoy fresh eggs as one of their breakfast options after the nutritious staple was banned from Iraq for one year.

After receiving a plethora of requests from Soldiers and the command group, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Sabrina Nero, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y., took it upon herself to find a way to once again get fresh eggs on the menu; Nero serves as the command food advisor with Company B, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B.

“When the 4th Inf. Div. got here, everyone, including the command staff, was wondering where the eggs were, so I went to find out why there were no eggs here,” Nero said.

Receiving the mission, Nero immediately got a copy of the memorandum, which banned fresh eggs that originated in Kuwait after a bird flu outbreak in March 2007.

“I read the memorandum from the state department and found a technicality that would allow eggs back into Iraq,” she explained.

“The technicality was the Iraqi Government didn’t want poultry products shipped into Iraq that had originated from Kuwait. If it originated in Kuwait, that meant we couldn’t get the product.”

She said she noticed the letter never said Soldiers couldn’t have eggs – it stated the eggs couldn’t come from Kuwait.

Nero wondered where else she could procure eggs since Kuwait was off limits.

“I went and talked to the food safety officer, and she gave me a list of all the approved sources where we could source eggs outside of Kuwait,” she said.

Nero then pieced together the necessary paperwork for a proposal to crack open alternative sources of fresh eggs and poultry from other countries surrounding Iraq.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Aaron Rosencrans, MND-B PAO

Fresh eggs are prepared at the Ironhorse Dining Facility for Soldiers and civilians here April 7.

She submitted a proposal to her chain of command for approval from Lt. Gen. James Lovelace, commanding general of U.S. Army Central and Coalition Forces Land Component Command.

Nero said there was some hesitation as to whether or not to accept the proposal because all food products were shipped through Kuwait; but in the end, she got a green light from all levels and eggs began to roll into Iraq.

To her surprise, her efforts not only affected Iraq but also Afghanistan and other neighboring countries where U.S. troops were stationed.

“Since the military houses its food in Kuwait, eggs became available for all Soldiers in southwestern Asia,” she said. “All it took was one person to stand up and point out the technicality. We were just the ones to push the issue.”

Soldiers seemed appreciative of the new addition to the breakfast menu at the Ironhorse Sports Oasis.

“I was already eating breakfast every day, but now that they got real eggs, it makes it even better,” said Pfc. Manuel Silvas, a native of Houston, who serves as a generator repair specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, STB, 4th Inf. Div. “The eggs give me more motivation to wake up in the morning and get some chow.”

Spc. Benjamin Heath, a native of Overland Park, Kan., and regular breakfast eater said he is happy he can now add eggs to his morning routine. Heath, who ordered three eggs, cooked over medium, serves as an administrator with the Inspector General, Co. A, STB, 4th Inf. Div.

Thinking proactively, Nero said Soldiers can rest easy if there’s an outbreak of bird flu at one of the suppliers.

“Even in the event there is a producer who has an outbreak of the bird flu or has some sort of health issue with their products, there are other facilities we can procure our eggs from,” she said. “This way, we won’t have an interruption in our supply of poultry products from neighboring countries.”

Aside from the recent addition of eggs to the menu, Nero said she had another project on the table for Soldiers this summer and was willing to share the inside scoop.

“The menu board meeting begins this month, and we’re working to bring sherbet back to Baghdad,” she said. “The sherbet should be available by this summer if all goes well. There has been a great demand for a low-calorie alternative to ice cream, so I’ve been working to bring this back for Soldiers who want to eat something sweet, but don’t want all the calories.”

With Nero’s time in Iraq coming to a close, she said she feels she can leave country knowing she accomplished something good for the Soldiers.

“I’m just happy I’m leaving knowing the Soldiers got their fresh eggs,” she said. “It goes to show if you want something done, all you need to do is raise your voice and it will happen.”

## Chaplain's Corner: Strive to find moral high ground in Christ

### MND-B Chaplains Office

As Soldiers living in a combat zone, we pride ourselves on integrity.

Integrity and moral courage are critical to our cohesion as a unit and fighting force.

As the deployment marches on and we become more familiar with one another, we may start looking for ways to relax some of the rules.

It is human nature but we must realize rules and regulations are for our good. Rules restrain us and reveal the honor of an organization.

Those we work and serve with know us well by this time and may even allow us more flexibility in upholding the standards but we have to remain on the moral high ground.

It is easy to slip off this high ground but with the help of your battle buddy who is

your accountability partner; you will stay firmly rooted on the high ground.

You do have an accountability partner, don’t you?

The apostle Peter dealt with similar issues.

He wrote these words, “Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that our Lord will bring you when he is revealed ... Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for

as it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1: 13-16).

Many in the early church as in today’s society were sexually impure, lifeless, self-righteous, judgmental and deeply hypocritical.

Yet God’s word and decree is for us to live morally pure or holy lives. We are to be transformed into the image of our God.

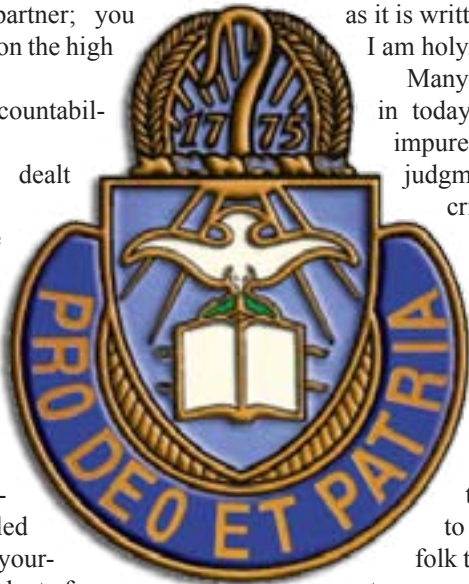
What is particularly striking about our Lord is that sinful people flocked to him, while self-righteous folk tended to avoid an encounter.

Peter himself had experienced Christ’s penetrating loving holiness. Even after his greatest mistakes, Peter couldn’t keep away from Jesus.

Our Lord had created an environment of grace where Peter felt comfortable to come and share his heart. Peter knew God loved him and would know what to do with his great moral failures.

Let us refuse by God’s grace to conform to desires grounded in ignorance and folly rather than truth and wisdom.

Let us be held accountable to God and grant others permission to speak into our life so that we have help staying on the moral high ground and demonstrating the Army Values and spiritual integrity as we continue to protect the nation of Iraq and defend our nation against terrorism.



**Visit the 4ID website for a full archive of past and present news and other important info.**

<http://www.hood.army.mil/4id>



# Stage Right Review: *Stop-Loss* addresses one side of issue

By Pfc. Samantha Schutz

MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – In the movie “Stop-Loss,” actor Ryan Phillippe (Breach) portrays a staff sergeant who takes on what some Soldiers face in today’s Army.

Ask any service member who’s been deployed about post-traumatic stress disorder – we’ve all heard of it. We’re briefed about it before we ship overseas and again when we return home.

Urban combat is stressful enough – imagine patrolling through alleyways and houses, never knowing who or where the enemy is, your every thought centered on keeping yourself and your buddies alive. Do that every day for up to a year or longer, and it’s sure to have its effect on you. Do it multiple times, and maybe you’ll start looking forward to the day when you can stand down and let a fresher fighter rise up.

Now, imagine that day has finally come. You’ve returned from your second tour of duty in the combat zone, still mourning the losses of several brothers-in-arms and still jumping at any sound resembling a gunshot or grenade. You arrive at your local military base expecting to turn in your duffel bag and boots, but instead you’re told to fill it up and put them on – you’re being shipped back to Iraq.

This involuntary extension of a military contract is known as “stop-loss.” It was commonly used in the Gulf War and has been used even more frequently throughout the War on Terror in the Middle East. Even though it’s in the fine print of all military enlistment contracts, stop-loss has been the basis for many a negative reaction amongst recent veterans – many of whom suffer from PTSD-related symptoms.

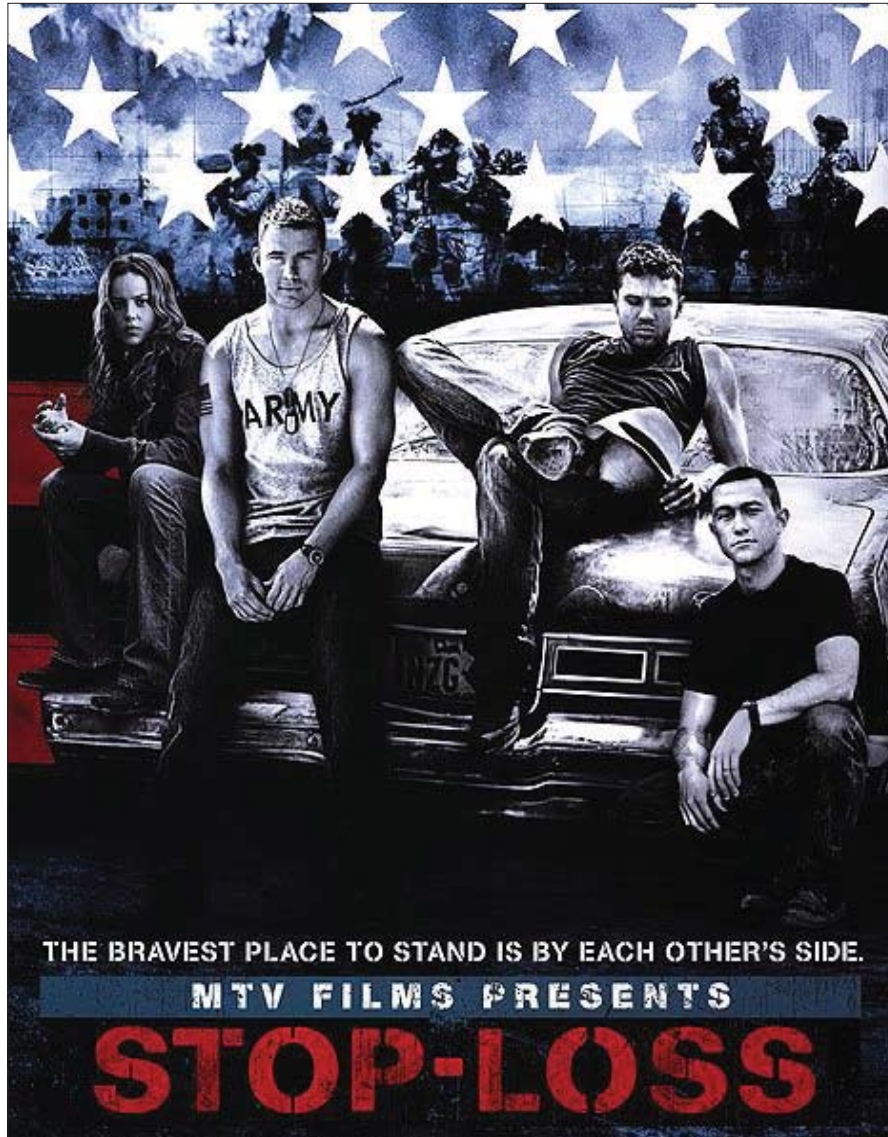
In “Stop-Loss,” the movie, the above is exactly what happens to Army Staff Sgt. Brandon King, played by Ryan Phillippe (Breach). He returns to his small Texas town as a young, decorated war hero, proud to have served but ready to end his term of service and begin a civilian life.

As a squad leader in combat, King led his Soldiers into an ambush; now, he feels responsible for the deaths and injuries of his friends and countrymen – even though he is highly commended by everyone for saving two lives during the operation. At night, he suffers through terrible nightmares. All day, he’s plagued by anxiety and deep depression. His two best friends, fellow Texans who served with him during that fateful mission, are haunted by their own wartime ghosts.

While King is clinging to the values the Army taught him



Pfc. Samantha Schutz



and trying to hold himself, his friends and his Family together, he gets the news – he’s being stop-lossed. All his plans for the future are out the window; he is being forced against his will to walk once again in the face of danger for a cause he barely understands.

Hearing this news sends King over the edge. Going against his training, he loses his temper and curses at his officer-in-charge. The lieutenant colonel threatens King with the stockade, which causes him to flee the scene. Now he’s absent without leave and is giving serious thought to his personal values, questioning everything he stands for.

**“Sir, I’ve always done the right thing.  
This is wrong.”**

Of all the films that have risen out of the ashes of the Middle Eastern conflict, “Stop-Loss” is absolutely the most poignant. Director Kimberly Peirce is proving herself fully capable of meeting controversial issues head-on. Much like she did with her first movie, “Boys Don’t Cry,” Peirce shows her audience a slice of modern reality that is at once both enraging and

enlightening. This film seems to span the entire range of human emotion, sparing none.

The first scene shows King and his troops in action during their ambush. Short of documentary footage, this is arguably one of the best-portrayed modern combat scenes to date. There is no comic relief; there are no Rambo-esque acts of heroism – what we see is raw, fast-paced and in-your-face urban warfare at its worst.

Another gripping piece of the film shows King visiting a wounded comrade in an Army hospital. The characters’ emotions – and their attempts at masking them – are so believable. Too many movies of this type go overboard with the melodrama, but Peirce manages to keep her actors in check, making it easy to empathize with what their characters are going through.

Although the trailer for “Stop-Loss” might’ve made it seem like an anti-war, anti-military propaganda piece to some people, the truth is it’s absolutely not. PTSD and involuntary extensions are two very real aspects of our current conflict, and the film approaches them realistically. It also broaches some other important topics, including suicide and the importance of friends and Family. However, this straightforward approach to these white-hot issues is bound to offend a few of you. The truth is, both stop-loss the issue and “Stop-Loss” the movie are downright controversial.

**“If you’re spooked, it’s okay.  
There’s no shame in that.”**

I’ll be honest: I didn’t make it through the first 15 minutes of this movie without crying shamelessly, and I stared raptly at the screen for the remaining hour with tears in my eyes. Sure, I’m just a journalist, but I’m still a Soldier – plus, I have plenty of good friends who have gone to Hell and back on the front lines.

One of my best friends was stop-lossed just before the end of his three-year enlistment. He ended up spending another year in combat, and the PTSD he experiences has changed him forever. So let’s just say this movie hit home hard for me, and I don’t think I would recommend it to my friend. If I did encourage him to watch it, it would be with a forewarning.

The forewarning I would give would be this: watch “Stop-Loss” with an open mind. As a proud Soldier, it might be easy to get defensive when King starts challenging authority and questioning his values. A bitter person might find it too easy to side with King and lose sight of his or her own values.

For civilians, though, it’s important to bear in mind that King’s dilemma is personal, and fictional. The way he feels and the way he chooses to deal with his feelings does not reflect each and every service member who has been affected by these issues.

Still, if it hit home for me, it will hit home for many. I give “Stop-Loss” five stars out of five.





# Gaming Review: Rock Band

## Gather 'THE BAND' back together, there's a new gig in town

By Sgt. Mark Matthews  
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – There is a reason I never reviewed Guitar Hero III. Despite it being one of my all-time favorite games, I never sat down and wrote a review for it. I wanted to, but every time I sat down to the computer to write one, I got about two paragraphs into it and simply drew a blank. I hit this writers block because once you talk about how great it is, there's nothing more to say. Rock Band, however, leaves me with plenty to talk about.

I'll start off by saying that Rock Band is a gem, and even though its price tag might scare you – at \$180 for the entire kit – I assure you it's worth every penny.

For those of you who are unaware of the concept of Rock Band, it's a game that turns you into a rock star – plain and simple. You can play by yourself, but if you can find three friends to rock alongside you – this is where Rock Band shines.

A singer, a bass guitarist, a lead guitarist and, my personal favorite, a drummer, is all you need to completely rock out. However, if you do purchase this game and start your own band, choose your singer very carefully. I found this one out the hard way. Trust me, there's nothing worse than hearing a good friend completely murder "Wanted: Dead or Alive."

Singing, to me, is the hardest part in the game. The words of the song will scroll past on the top of the screen and even though the words you sing do not matter, the pitch at which you sing does – and that's when it sometimes gets ugly.

As you increase the difficulty for the singer from easy to medium, hard and expert, the criteria of how strict the game judges your pitch are increased. Almost anyone who can carry a tune will pass the songs on easy, but you actually have to be a pretty decent singer to progress further than just a few songs on any other difficulty.

Also, as the singer, you are also responsible for any handheld percussive instrument the song might include. For example, a tambourine, triangle or cow bell as seen in "Don't Fear the Reaper." Yes, I need more cow bell.

The guitars are pretty standard. Anyone who has played any of the Guitar Heroes will pick up and play with little to no learning curves. The cool thing

about Rock Band's guitars is how very different the bass guitar is from the lead guitar.

Bass guitar is considerably easier than the lead guitar in most songs, but the bass guitar does what a bass guitar does. It keeps the rhythm and will, for the most part, stick with a pattern for most of the song.

The lead guitar however, is a beast. Just like in Guitar Hero, if you can master the lead guitar, you can pretty much play any song on either guitar. The only difference in the guitars is that the guitar that comes with the Rock Band bundle has the buttons both on the top of the neck as well as the same set of buttons at the bottom of the neck to simulate solos.

It would have been nice for the developers to include a bonus for players who play their solos on the lower buttons, but it's cool every once in a while to switch it up.

The drums were the one thing that had never been done before in the gaming world, and they nailed it. I have never had so much fun playing

a video game before – ever. I have no rhythm. I have never played the drums a day in my life, but as I'm drumming away with my electronic drums with Rock Band – I might as well be Tommy Lee.

Four drums sit in front of the drummer and a kick drum pedal sits underneath them. As the colored notes fall from the top of the screen, the player strikes the corresponding drum with the color



Sgt. Mark Matthews

of the note. It sounds way easier than it actually is.

I spent a day or so failing songs over and over again on the easy difficulty setting, but soon thereafter, once I got the hang of it, I was drumming my little heart out and loving every minute of it.

There's no real storyline in the game. Sure, you're a young band and get money to buy stuff by playing different gigs around the world, but other than that, it's all about playing pretend instruments and make-believing you're a star.

This brings me to my last point about Rock Band – the songs.

The songs are absolutely amazing. Foo Fighters, Nirvana, Soundgarden, Garbage and so many all included. Plus, you can download dozens from Xbox Live, such as 30 Seconds to Mars (one of my favorite bands).

In the end, you can't go wrong with Rock Band. It's just all around fun. Sure, it's pricey, but you can buy everything separately; and, if you have a guitar from Guitar Hero, it will work just as well as the one that comes with the kit.

I don't buy bad games, which is why I don't review bad games. Rock Band is, and will forever be, something I will enjoy. I've forgotten all about Guitar Hero. Rock Band is my new musical game of choice.

I give Rock Band 5 rock stars out of 5.





# Mol's Wide World of Sports

## How big is NFL football nation?

By Sgt. Michael Molinaro  
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq—So how popular is the National Football League? I am going to try and prove my point without even mentioning anything about the Super Bowl, the playoffs, heck, I won't even talk about any games.

Let's start with this month, April. On April 15, the Masters had been only two days old and a great story had emerged about the path Trevor Immelman took to get his first green jacket.

The baseball season was entering its third week and surprise teams were starting to emerge (Kansas City, Baltimore) and favorites were in trouble (Detroit). The Stanley Cup Playoffs were underway and the NBA playoff matchups were being set.

But guess what was the lead story on every sports page and internet site across the country? The NFL schedule had been announced.

The schedule.

Now, I will be the first to admit that I am not complaining. Not at all. In fact, when I woke up, the first thing I thought about (and I am NOT making this up) is that I would find out today when my Steelers get to play the Browns, how many prime-time games we have, and if we would have a home game while I am home on leave.

Analysts broke down each team's schedule.

They talked about the best games of the year. Chat boards dissected what the records of New England and India-

napolis would be before they meet in the regular season. I get suckered in every time, but when you think about it, it's just the schedule.

Then we have the draft.

Now this is good stuff. I remember my first draft. It was 1986 on a Monday. I was sick and home from school for the day. The NFL draft

came on ESPN and I was hypnotized. It was like a game day to me. I had the opportunity to see, at the same time as the coaches and everyone else, who was going to be the Steelers next hall-of-famer.

Since that day, the draft has continued to morph into a game-like spectacle.

The draft is held on Saturdays (to which I was very upset that my run of being "sick" on draft days had to come to an end); draft shows flood the TVs the week of the draft; every web site from A to Z has mock drafts with their "experts," and pro towns have draft day activities at the stadium and are able to watch the draft on the jumbotron in the stadium while the kids run around the field and gather autographs.

The real proof behind the pudding is the draft's television ratings. Last year, ESPN garnered a 5.2 rating.

That means a tad more than five percent of the total U.S. population watched the draft.

By the way, the draft was eight hours long.

Put those numbers in comparison to other sporting events. The World Series last year had a game with an 8.5.

The NBA Finals averaged a 6.2.

College Football generated a 5.0 on Saturday nights.



Sgt. Michael 'Mol' Molinaro

The highest-rated cable show this past week was Sponge-Bob with a 3.6.

These examples were either the sports championship games or a half-hour TV show. We're talking about basically how an eight-hour long talk show had an average of five million Americans sitting in front of their TV watching this thing.

Why did I say it's basically a talk-show?

The NFL draft is nothing but a bunch of guys talking and talking about what players should be picked, why and by whom. That's it. There is no action. The actual drama of your team picking their new players takes about ten seconds from the time the commissioner walks onto the stage until he announces the player's name, but we watch and watch.

For eight hours we watch.

That boggles the mind, and I am guilty as charged. I have been to draft parties.

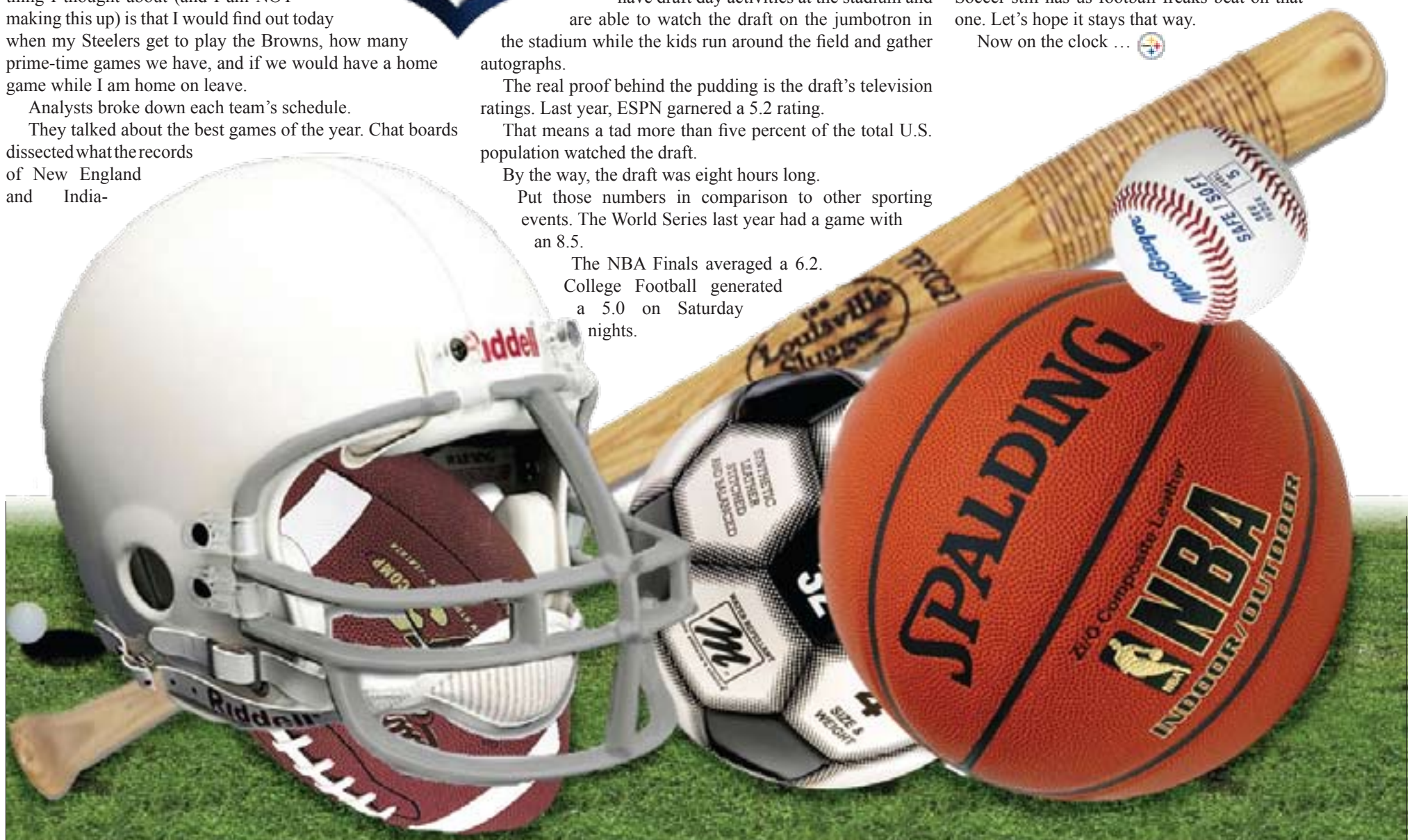
Last year, as I was cooking on the grill and enjoying some cold beverages while wearing my personalized Steelers jersey, the wife was at the mall ALL day with her friends. A win-win for everyone!

I didn't even talk about the NFL scouting combine and its TV coverage or when mini-camps start in May, and local and national sportscasts cover every incompleteness or big hit that happens as if it means something.

The NFL reigns supreme.

Now, NFL fans may be crazy, but we don't riot – not yet. Soccer still has us football freaks beat on that one. Let's hope it stays that way.

Now on the clock ...





# Army defeats AF 95-93, clinches championship

## Bell, Bartley lead Army in Armed Forces Basketball

By Tim Hipps

Army News Service

FORT INDIANTOWN GAP, Pa. — Sgt. Ron Bartley had 40 points and eight rebounds to lead the All-Army men's team to a 95-93 overtime victory over All-Air Force in the 2008 Armed Forces Men's Basketball Championships.

Bartley, of Fort Carson, Colo., shot 12-of-23 from the field, including 8-of-16 on 3-pointers, and had four assists and three steals in the Soldiers' best performance of the double-round-robin tournament played March 21-27 at Blue Mountain Sports Arena.

Second Lt. Matt Bell scored 21 points and Spc. Brett Thomas of Fort Huachuca, Ariz., added 10 points for All-Army. Warrant Officer Aaron Stuart of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, had eight points and a team-high 14 rebounds.

Bell, 23, a four-year starter for the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., was named to the Armed Forces All-Tournament team after averaging 23.8 points, 4.3 rebounds and 2.6 assists for All-Army (2-4), which finished fourth in the tournament against squads from the Air Force (5-1), Navy (3-3) and Marine Corps (2-4).

Bartley's hot hand kept the Soldiers in the game during the first half of their second meeting with Air Force.

"That's the man, right there," Bartley said of Bell. "Last game he had about 40, so I knew they were going to key on him. Coach let us have a spread offense and let the guards do their thing. I got a little hot and caught on fire and rolled with that."

Bartley's 3-pointer from the corner, his fifth of the first half, gave Army a 36-29 lead and the Soldiers led 40-31 at halftime.

"In the first half, I was missing everything," Bell said. "Ron just got hot. He had his breakout game. We rode him the entire first half and a lot of the second half, too. He

was hitting unbelievable shots.

"I just tried to keep my head in it and when I got an open shot, I was going to try to knock it down, but he controlled the tempo of the game and put us on a huge run to get the lead in the first half."

Bartley made another 3-pointer to open the second half. His eighth and final 3-pointer gave Army a 58-46 lead with 13:43 remaining.

"When I got tired, Matt picked it up, and that was it," said Bartley.

From there, Bell made three 3-pointers and three free throws as Army tried to thwart Air Force's final run. But the Airmen would not go away and the Soldiers missed 10 free throws in the final 2 minutes.

After Staff Sgt. Bernard James of Beale Air Force Base, Calif., made a layup that knotted the score at 87 with 10 seconds left, Bell missed a 3-point attempt as the horn sounded ending regulation.

Thomas scored three points in overtime and 2nd Lt. Marshall Jackson of Fort Benning, Ga., made a free throw with 17 seconds left that sealed the victory.

"Yeah, we almost lost it there at the end of regulation, but that says a lot about our



Photo by Tim Hipps, Army News Service

Sgt. Ron Bartley of Fort Carson, Colo., drives past Senior Airman Ollie Bradley of Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., during All-Army's 95-93 overtime victory over All-Air Force in the Armed Forces Men's Basketball Championship Tournament March 26 at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa. Bartley had 40 points on 12-of-23 shooting, including 8-of-16 on 3-pointers to lead the Soldiers to their most impressive victory of the tourney. He was named to the All-Armed Forces Team that will represent the United States in the 2008 Conseil International du Sport Militaire World Championship Tournament April 14-22 at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

team," Bell said. "We missed a ton of free throws and they tied the game up and forced it into overtime.

"We could have just folded, especially against Air Force, who had a better record. but our guys picked it up in overtime and we were able to pull it out."

Bell, Bartley and 2nd Lt. Robert Moore of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, were named

to the 2008 All-Armed Forces Team that will compete in the 2008 Conseil International du Sport Militaire World Championship Tournament April 14-22 at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

Moore, who did not play in Army's overtime victory over Air Force, averaged 12.6 points and 6.4 rebounds during the Armed Forces tournament.

## MND-B Soldiers support Special Olympics, host Annual 5-K Torch Run

By Sgt. Marizol Ruiz

MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq — A piece of America was brought to Iraq when Soldiers from the 716th Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade, Multi-National Division — Baghdad, along with their civilian partners, participated in the Annual 5-K Torch Run in support of the Special Olympics Organizations in Kentucky and Tennessee here March 30.

As the crowd poured in at 6 a.m., approximately 300 participants took their places at the registration tables for the run.

The run, a historical event, which has been carried out by the 716th MP Bn. for more than 10 years, is an opportunity for service members and civilians get together and join forces to raise awareness for the cause of the Special Olympics.

"We were not expecting that many runners; we only prepared for 240 to show up," said, Capt. Hillary Mann, a native of Murfreesboro, Tenn., who serves as the event coordinator and battalion adjutant with the 716th Military Police Battalion, 18th MP Bde.

"The battalion's long-standing relationship with the Kentucky Special Olympics Organization has allowed it to sponsor and raise funds in the past for the organization," she added.

Prizes included T-Wall trophies for the top runners in the

female and male categories, and coins were presented to the torch bearers.

The first place male winner was Sgt. Martin Ventura, a native of Fort Hood, Texas, who serves as a supply clerk with the 64th MP Bn., MND-B, finished with a time of 18:05. The first female to cross the finishing line in 20:02, was Spc. Amanda Fia, a native of Fort McCoy, Wis., who serves as a Combat Medic with the 851st Vertical Engineer Company, MND-B.

Some of the participating Soldiers had a connection to the Special Olympians. Whether it was their children, a member of their Family or community, they were dedicated to the cause.

"Today I am taking part in the event mainly in support of my younger brother, Dexter Hoover, who is a 15-year-old victim of cerebral palsy," said Spc. Derrick Hahns, a native of Herbert Field, Fla., who serves with the 2nd Battlefield Coordination Detachment, 81st Regional Readiness Command. "He is also a Special Olympian, and today I am running in his honor. I have his name printed on my t-shirt."

The command team was happy with the battalion's participation and what the event meant to the Soldier.

"I am very motivated about the folks who came out to support the Special Olympics today," said Lt. Col. Darryl Johnson, commander of the 716th MP Bn., and a native of

Newport, Tenn.

"The Special Olympics Torch Run is a great event because it has the Special Olympians coupled with the law enforcement community, and as a military police battalion, it's a perfect connection. It shows how the military remembers and cares about them."

Command Sgt. Maj. Jeff Palmer, an Acorn, Ohio, native, who serves as the

Command Sergeant Major for the 716th MP Bn., said the event did as much good for the Soldiers as it did for the community.

"All the Soldiers really like doing this kind of activity. Anything given back to the community is an honor," said Palmer. "It's a great opportunity for us to give back while we're here, and it also gives the Soldiers a chance to take a break and take their minds off the war for a little while," he added.

The Special Olympics is an organization that provides sports training and athletic competition for individuals with mental and developmental disabilities.

Soldiers serving in Iraq go the extra mile every day for their country, but bringing the spirit of America and taking the time out to participate in a traditional event in a combat zone seemed to reveal the true honor and dedication of the service members.



Sgt. 1st Class Craig McNeal, a native of Hollandale, Miss., pounds fists with an Iraqi boy while on patrol in Sadr City, a district of Baghdad, April 1. McNeal is the platoon sergeant for 4th Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, "Gimlets," 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. The Gimlets moved to Joint Security Station Ur in support of the recent combat operations in the area.



## Gimlets work to flush terror out of Sadr City



Soldiers assigned to 4th Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment "Gimlets," 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division walk next to an open sewer while on a dismounted patrol through the Sadr City district of Baghdad April 1.

**Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Christina Bhatti**

*2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.*

BAGHDAD – Days after intense fighting, and the call to peace March 30 from Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers patrol the outskirts of Sadr City, a district of Baghdad, to ensure the safety of the city's residents.

Sadr City has been the backdrop of many conflicts for Coalition Forces since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. The city is the poorest of all the Baghdad districts and has historically been a safe haven for terrorists.

The Soldiers from Company A and a platoon from Company B, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, are tired, dirty and work 24 hours a day with only cat naps to sustain them, but they relentlessly take to the filth-ridden streets in their mission to drive terrorists out of the area.

What began as a 96-hour tasking March 26 turned into an open-ended mission.

Capt. Scott Bailey, Company A commander, said the mission in support of combat operations was a success.

"We had some significant contact when we first arrived," said Bailey, a Running Springs, Calif., native, "but we planned good company attacks and now it is pretty quiet here."

Bailey attributed the quiet to a show of force from the Gimlets and other Coalition Forces and said he is confident that the Gimlets have helped the residents of Sadr City.

The Soldiers said now it is up to the local residents.

"We definitely helped stop the shooting, but only time will tell if we help the people improve their future," said Staff Sgt. James Dean, a native of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and platoon sergeant from 4th Platoon, Company B, 1st Bn., 21st Inf. Regt.

For now, the focus for the Gimlets is to support the Iraqi Security Forces and rid the area of terrorists.

When fighting broke out in Sadr City, the Iraqi Army checkpoints were targeted by the terrorists. They were consistently mortared and the Iraqi soldiers eventually left the checkpoint.

To help restore their confidence, the Gimlets provided peace of mind with a constant presence and supplies, such as water, to the Iraqi Army soldiers.

"It is important that we help them get on their feet," Bailey said. "We need to support them and put them out front so the Iraqi people can gain confidence in their army."

The Gimlet commander said he doesn't know when his Soldiers will leave Joint Security Station Ur and head back to their area of operations, but he said he does know his Soldiers are working hard to accomplish the mission around Sadr City.



An Iraqi child talks to a Soldier assigned to 4th Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, "Gimlets," 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment.