

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE 1ST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

# BASTOGNE



MAGAZINE

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 6  
MAY 2008

SPARTANS  
ASSAULT  
AL QAEDA  
HIDEOUT







At Patrol Base Olson, 1st Sgt. Richard Tucker, Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, stands in front of a mass formation during a Change of Responsibility Ceremony. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Doheny, Bastogne PAO)

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MAGAZINE

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BM IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY  
THE TASK FORCE BASTOGNE PUBLIC  
AFFAIRS OFFICE, HHC 1BCT, 101  
ABN, FSC/PAO, COB SPEICHER,  
IRAQ APO AE 09393 DSN 849-2501.

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IRBORN

PAGE 2: BAYJI CITIZENS  
RECEIVE MUCH NEEDED  
MEDICAL ATTENTION

PAGE 3: TASK FORCE  
SPARTAN MPS CONDUCT  
AIR ASSAULT

PAGE 9: SUNNI AND SHIA  
SHEIKS COME TOGETHER  
IN BALAD

PAGE 12: TOBY KEITH  
TAKES TIME OUT OF BUSY  
SCHEDULE TO VISIT WITH  
BALLS OF THE EAGLE SOL-  
DIERS AT LSAA

PAGE 13: EYE OF THE EA-  
GLE PHOTO SPREAD



# BAYJI HOSPITAL DRAWS CROWD

By Spc. Rick Rzepka  
BASTOGNE PAO

**BAYJI, Iraq** – More than 550 people were provided with much needed medical care at the Bayji hospital in the Hai al Asry neighborhood in the restive city of Bayji April 15.

A lengthy line of Bayji citizens snaked around the aged hospital building as Iraqi Army medics from the 4th Iraqi Army Division helped the hospital workers to provide care to the sick and indigent.

The humanitarian operation, which was dubbed a “collaborative medical engagement”, was a united effort by Bayji city councilmen, local Iraqi policemen, the 4th

Iraqi Army Division and the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division.

“The turnout for the event was more than we had hoped for,” said Capt. Michael Sykes, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment. “Bayji’s local government officials recognized a need to solve people’s immediate healthcare needs and so they stepped up and took action. It was great to see the locals interacting with the local police and Army,” he said.

As citizens waited in line, many asked Iraqi Army Soldiers for the phone number to the local security station and when the next medical engagement would occur.

Children in line were all smiles as they received toys from Iraqi Soldiers.

The CME was initiated in response to the city council’s request to provide citizens with immediate medical care under the protection of Iraqi security forces, who maintained order throughout the searing heat of the day.

As the security situation continues to improve here, more and more Iraqis are shifting their attention to the need for essential services, such as healthcare.

“We want to live in peace,” said a woman with a sick child. “It is not Iraqis fighting Iraqis,” she said. “It is foreigners we are fighting.”

Across the Salah ad Din province, security continues to improve due to a myriad of factors including enhanced Iraqi Security Force operations and a burgeoning Sons of Iraq movement.

Local government officials and security personnel have begun to take note of the Sons of Iraq movement’s efficacy and are making moves to bring them into the fold of the Iraqi security forces here.

Grateful Iraqis who received treatment for their ailments were seen shaking hands with Soldiers as they walked through the streets, embracing the day’s calm.



Bayji citizens wait in line to receive medical attention at the Bayji Hospital in the Hai al Asry neighborhood in the restive city.





# CONTROLLED CHAOS

The 56th MP Company of Task Force Spartan conducts a full-scale joint air assault, to wrap up their deployment in the Salah ad Din province. The operation tabbed Marauder Harvest, resulted in the killing of five AQI, and the detention of several others.

Story and Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Doheny  
BASTOGNE PAO

**TIKRIT, Iraq**— On a hazy morning April 12, a group of Army Reserve Soldiers from the 56<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company from Mesa, Ariz., did something they never thought they would get the chance to do, conduct a Screaming Eagle Air Assault.

Military Policemen in Iraq routinely conduct Police Transition Team duties in assisting Iraqis with the policing of their communities, but rarely, if ever, get the opportunity to conduct full-scale air assaults.

The 56<sup>th</sup>, attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Troops Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team, have spent the previous 11 months in Tikrit patrolling streets, training policemen and conducting combat operations.

On their 11<sup>th</sup> month, they were given the opportunity of a lifetime; conduct a joint air assault with the Screaming Eagles of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault).

Along with their Iraqi police counterparts, they crammed into UH-60 Black Hawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters, preparing to hunt down Al Qaeda in the desolate Western Desert of the Salah ad Din Province.

As the blades on the helicopters began to turn, the Soldiers signaled to the crew chiefs that they were primed for take off.

What was waiting for them in the desert was something their commander, Maj. Richard VanBuskirk, from Clarkston, Mich., described as “controlled chaos”.

As they completed their insertion and jumped from their helicopters, they realized why 101st Soldiers are feared by the enemy.

The surprising arrival of Coalition and Iraqi forces by helicopter left targeted AQI members with no choice but to “squirt” from the objective. The result of this enemy fleeing to their trucks was an ensuing fire-fight.

“Supporting attack helicopters informed us that a group of men were moving to trucks located near a house,” said VanBuskirk. “The men in these trucks were armed with machine guns and assault rifles.

They fired on us multiple times as they tried to flee our location, but we eliminated the enemy threat.”

After clearing numerous buildings, houses and exploiting numerous items linked to AQI, the mission was complete and they once again loaded on helicopters and returned to base.

According to Staff Sgt. David Heath, from Phoenix, Ariz., the purpose of this IP intelligence-driven mission was to take the fight to the insurgents, denying them safe haven and refuge.

“Denying an insurgency the safety and security to plan and execute their missions is a major component to the overall security mission in Iraq. It’s not just an important mission, it’s THE mission,” said Heath.

Heath admits that the Soldiers in his unit could not have completed a mission with as many moving parts and pieces as there were, without the competency of the





**Soldiers from the 56th Military Police Company, prepare to conduct “cold load training” to prepare them and Iraqi S.W.A.T. for an upcoming air assault into the Western Desert of the Salah ad Din province April 12.**

Iraqi SWAT. He feels they deserve as much credit for the overall success of the mission, which resulted in the killing of five AQI and the detaining of three.

Ever since the Spartans of the 1<sup>st</sup> STB assumed responsibility of the greater-Tikrit area in October 2007, they recognized the proficiency of the MPs. This led to the selection of the unit to conduct an operation of this size, which is usually set aside for the battalion’s attached Infantry Soldiers.

The 1<sup>st</sup> STB has a unique task organization in Iraq. They are the only Special Troops Battalion to have responsibility for a large amount of battle-space.

Certain units under its command, such as the 56<sup>th</sup>, are tasked to conduct joint Iraqi Police, full-spectrum combat and counter-insurgency operations in their respective areas of responsibility.

“What is unique about the 56<sup>th</sup> MPs is that the Police Transition Team Company has been given more

responsibility than a normal PTT company due to our task organization and limited combat forces here in the Tikrit area” said Maj. Timothy Povich, 1st STB Executive Officer.

“They have operated the same way as any other maneuver unit while also accomplishing their PTT mission ever since we have been in Iraq. They own their own battle-space in Tikrit, and conduct engagements with local leaders, conduct training and patrol the streets with Iraqi police.”

Povich said the 56<sup>th</sup> was selected by his battalion commander, Lt. Col. Rick Rhyne, for this air assault because they exceeded all expectations throughout their unique mission in Iraq.

“The 56<sup>th</sup> MP Company has done an incredible amount of work for us, this was a great opportunity for them to conduct an air assault with the IP, to kind of end their deployment with a successful mission,” said Povich.





“The battalion commander picked them because they aren’t your normal MP Company.”

According to VanBuskirk, it has been an honor to serve under Task Force Spartan.

He said, “Being under the command of the 1<sup>st</sup> STB over the last few months has been the most rewarding period in my 20 year career.”

VanBuskirk stated that his company’s final mission in Iraq was as unique as the duties they have conducted for the active duty Army battalion they supported for the last seven months.

“If you look back throughout military history, it will be very difficult if not impossible to find a United States Army Reserve Military

Police Combat Support Company to be chosen to lead a Joint Coalition / Iraqi Police air assault mission from start to finish,” said VanBuskirk.

“This also shows how joint active duty Army and Army Reserve relationships have matured over the years, and the confidence our battalion and brigade has in our company.”



**Soldiers from the 56th Military Police Company, attached to the 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, provide overwatch for other Soldiers in their unit and Iraqi SWAT. during Operation Marauder Harvest April 12 in the Western Desert of the Salah ad Din Province. The operation netted five enemy killed and the detention of others. The MPs, along with their Iraqi counterparts, were able to locate many items linked to al-Qaeda in Iraq.**







# SUNNI AND SHIA SHEIKS UNITE IN BALAD

By Spc. Rick Rzepka  
BASTOGNE PAO

BALAD, Iraq – For the first time since sectarian tension embroiled the Balad area, Sunni and Shia sheiks and local community leaders gathered in the same place to promote unity amongst the myriad of tribes.

More than one hundred sheiks and tribal elders from the communities of Duluiyah, Ishaki and the surrounding area gathered in a town-hall style meeting on April 3 to discuss repairing fractious differences in an attempt to bring peace and prosperity to the citizens of the region, which is comprised of about 40 percent Shia and 60 percent Sunni.

While tensions mount in the southern province of Basra, Shia and Sunni leaders have pledged cooperation and unity in the Balad area in an effort to stimulate the local economy through recent security gains.

Among the Shi'eks and elders, the governor of the Salah ad Din province, Hamad Hamood Shekti, was all smiles as he spoke enthusiastically about the way forward for the Iraqi people.

"There is hope here today," said Shekti who praised the sheiks for setting aside their differences to build on common ground.

"Today we are not Shi'a or Sunni, we are Iraqis," he said.

Employment and security were on the minds of most of the Iraqi influencers as they clamored over which comes first, jobs or guns. For many here, the answer is jobs.

"We must be able to support our families," said a Sunni sheik.

"We must be able to work together," he said.

In 2006 the flow of commerce and transportation were severed along sectarian fault lines causing small businesses and the local economy to suffer, but as the security situation continues to improve here, many Iraqis are heading back to work and are beginning to recognize the need to travel freely.

The sheiks also discussed bolstering the Iraqi security forces in the area to ease travel restrictions.

To facilitate the people's trust and a more prosperous marketplace, Iraqi leaders are pushing for a more





diversified security force that reflects the face of the people.

“I would like to see more people volunteer for the Iraqi army and the Iraqi police,” said Balad Mayor Amar Hali Mirhon.

“More participation from other tribes encourages the population to trust the army and police,” he said.

As the people of the Balad area continue to see an improved security situation, they are gaining confidence in the cooperation between local leaders.

“We understand that a lot of people lost their jobs because of past events, but we have settled our differences, and we welcome you all,” said Balad City Council Vice President Malik Lafta Ahmad.

**A Soldier from 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, gives a friendly pat to a buddy at a Sheik's conference in Balad. Balad community leaders have made great strides in the area with help from the Bastogne Cavalrymen.**

## Nashville mega-star visits Bastogne Artillerymen

By 1st Lt. Jonathan Springer  
2-320th FAR PAO



Instead of touring the world or recording his next blockbuster album, country singer Toby Keith decided to take a detour from music making and visit with Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 320<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault) April 28.

During his trip to Logistical Support Area Anaconda, the award-winning music star spent a few hours with Soldiers, and took part in a re-enlistment ceremony that saw five “Redlegs” re-up with the battalion.

“It’s an honor to be here with these fine Americans today; I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else,” said Keith after the ceremony.

For the Soldiers of the 2-320<sup>th</sup> FAR, it was an honor to have to get the opportunity to meet the country music singer and for him to participate in the re-enlistment ceremony.

“It was pretty awesome to meet Toby Keith; it made my re-enlistment that more special,” said Spc. Justin Troutman, a 22-

year old communications specialist with the battalion’s Headquarters and Headquarters Battery.

Troutman re-enlisted to stay at Fort Campbell for six more years and also received a bonus of 8,000 dollars.

“The money was good, but it wasn’t the reason I re-enlisted. Because of the Army I have a future, and I’m able to do a lot of things in the military that I wouldn’t be able to do in the civilian sector,” said Troutman.

According to Keith, getting to meet people like Troutman is why he frequently visits Soldiers in Iraq.

“I’m proud that I took part in this ceremony today, these Soldiers are great Americans,” said Keith.

Key leaders within the battalion also felt that Keith’s appearance during the ceremony made it much more special for the re-enlisting Soldiers.

“The fact

of the matter is, it’s special for someone like him come over here and meet with these Soldiers. It’s also special to see these ‘Balls of the Eagle’ Soldiers re-enlist, too,” said Maj. Elton Crawford, 2-320<sup>th</sup> FAR’s executive officer.

Crawford went on to add that what every Soldier does on a daily basis is extraordinary, and that it takes a unique and exceptional individual to reaffirm their commitment to this fight.

Troutman added, “This battalion is making a difference here everyday and I believe in our mission. That’s the main reason why I enlisted.”





# eye of the eagle

the world as Bastogne Soldiers see it

Photos by Bastogne PAO



An "Above the Rest" Soldier looks for suspicious items in a house during a recent mission near Bayji.



A "No Slack" Soldier constructs a building to be used by Sol.



Staff Sgt. Miguel Miranda, 2-320th FAR, leads a patrol along the Tigris River near Yethrib, Iraq.



Iraqi SWAT and Soldiers from Task Force Spartan watch as a CH-47 Chinook takes off in the Western Desert of the Salah ad Din province.



Specialist Ben Mishoe, HHC BDE, posts up in Tikrit.



Taskmaster Soldiers show Iraqi Army maintainers some equipment April 24.



A Cav Soldier shares a meal with locals in Balad.



# CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR BASTOGNE RE-ENLISTEES!

## APRIL 2008

SGT Jason Gilbert- HHC BDE  
SGT Chad Crosby- 426 BSB  
SGT Daniel Walker- 426 BSB  
SPC John Smith- 426 BSB  
SPC Sean McClarrrie- 426 BSB  
SPC Sheryllyn Glenn- 426 BSB  
SGT John Urbanski- 426 BSB  
SPC Raven Lindsay- 426 BSB  
SPC Kenneth Godwin-426 BSB  
PFC Adam Whittenberg-426 BSB  
SPC Brian Kramer-426 BSB  
SGT Jason Lawson-426 BSB  
SSG Stephen Miller-426 BSB  
SGT Jessica Miller-426 BSB  
SGT James Stineman- 2-327  
SPC That Vo- 2-327  
PFC Benjamin Wright- 2-327  
SSG Jeffrey Oliver- 2-327  
SPC Daniel O'Connor- 2-327  
SGT Damaar Green- 2-327  
SPC Harold Parker- 2-327  
PFC Daniel Morrow- 2-327  
SGT Ryan Macaulay- 2-327  
PFC Joseph Damman- 2-327  
PFC Benjamin Hewitt- 2-327  
SPC Alonso Salazar-Ortega- 2-327  
SPC Justen Anka- 2-327  
SPC Cody Roller- 2-327  
SPC Devonerice Lee- 2-320  
PFC John Rhodus- 2-320  
SSG Jeffery Williams- 2-320  
SGT Timothy Peteritis- 2-320  
SPC Arlee Maidesil- 2-320  
SPC Justin Troutman- 2-320  
PFC Casey Marlow-2-320  
SSG Bryan Lovelace- 2-320  
SPC Michael Calma- 1STB  
SGT Corina Kimball- 1STB  
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SGT Nicholas Brewer- 1-327  
SPC Michael Ortiz- 1-327  
PFC Chris Billingsley- 1-327  
SPC Jonathan Severance- 1-327  
SPC Mark Casteel- 1-327  
PFC Emanuel Marrero- 1-327  
PFC Ervin Cintron- 1-327  
SPC Anthony Collins- 1-327  
PFC Andres Dejesus- 1-327  
SGT Alan Norton- 1-327  
SPC Wallace Newton- 1-327  
SGT Grant Johnson- 1-327  
SGT Kris Wetherington- 1-327  
SGT- 1-327  
SGT Michael Border- 1-327  
SSG Clarence Darden- 1-327  
SSG Jimmy Weisner- 1-32 CAV  
PFC Cole Chambers- 1-32 CAV  
PFC Nathan Fries- 1-32 CAV  
PFC Paul Wilson- 1-32 CAV  
PFC Joshua Gloria- 1-32 CAV  
SPC Ryan Peralta- 1-32 CAV  
PFC Amilcar Mayorga-Espinosa- 1-32 CAV  
SGT James Forman- 1-32 CAV  
SSG Jeremy Wortmann- 1-32 CAV  
SPC Edwin Brown- 1-32 CAV  
SPC Jessie Harper- 1-32 CAV  
PFC Kyle Barth- 1-32 CAV  
SPC Steven Sisco- 1-32 CAV  
SGT Daniel Bath- 1-32 CAV  
SSG Akhanaton Thomas- 1-32 CAV  
SPC Cody Flick- 1-32 CAV  
SPC Randall Gibson- 1-32 CAV  
SPC Daniel Mason- 1-32 CAV  
SPC Jerry Derrick- 1-32 CAV  
SPC Thomas Millard- 1-32 CAV  
SPC Brian Flowers- 1-32 CAV