



The Striker Torch

The Official Newsletter of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division

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Iraqi Army
assumes
control
of
Coalition
Force's
combat
outposts



STRIKER 6

On Line

By COL Pat White
2nd BCT Commander



The Seasons Change

Summer has passed and autumn is upon the Soldiers of the Iron Brigade. Students have returned to school; the leaves have turned from green to beautiful hues of brown and orange; the baseball playoffs have begun and football season has started. Life looks so normal as we gaze from afar at our loved ones we left behind in Baumholder six months ago.

It is remarkable that six months has passed since we left Baumholder in the midst of a blizzard. Our days, weeks and months move rapidly because we remain constantly at task. The seasons change, but our days remain the same.

The Iraqi Fall is upon us and the weather has changed. Gone are the 120 degree days replaced with 100 degree days. Don't laugh; it is a welcome relief for the Soldiers of the Iron Brigade.

Much is going well for the citizens of Iraq and for the Iron Brigade Soldiers operating in the Mada'in Qada southeast of Baghdad. Compared to the five to ten IEDs that marked a typical day for our brigade during our last deployment in late 2006, a typical day here in the fall of 2008 has the Iraqi National Police proactively detaining a group of criminal/terrorists with U.S. Army Soldiers in overwatch.

We conduct similar operations with our partner Iraqi Army Division. The citizens, the security forces, the government--they are all working for and ready for a peaceful existence.

October 5 was a special day for the bri-

gade – due to a current engagement we could not attend Oktoberfest in Germany so we brought Oktoberfest to FOB Hammer. We celebrated with plentiful German food; Bavarian Alpine hats; ample near beer; sports day activities; a bratwurst-eating contest and a concert by our homegrown Soldier band.

On October 6 we hosted an end of Ramadan "Eid al Fitr" celebration for 150 Qada (county) political, religious and military leaders. The theme of the celebration was to illustrate how the political, religious and military leaders are working together in support of their citizens in a manner free from sectarian bias. This is a theme that we spend a lot of time trumpeting during our engagements out in the Qada.

Since the last issue of *The Striker Torch* the Iron Brigade has lost four heroes: PVT Jordan P.P. Thibeault from TF 1-6 IN, 1LT Thomas J. Brown from TF 2-6 IN, PFC Jamel A. Bryant from 40th EN, and PFC Christopher A. Bartkiewicz from TF 1-6 IN.

These Soldiers will be missed. We will not forget the valuable contribution these Soldiers made to their country and the impact they left on the Iron Brigade and the Army. We express our deepest condolences to the families and friends of these fallen warriors.

Iron Brigade family, you remain in our thoughts and are missed greatly.

COL Pat White
Commander, 2BCT
"Striker 6"



Our Army Values

We all see them every day in the rafters on the way to the Dining Facility. We all memorized them and are quizzed regularly on them. We are even evaluated on our adherence to them as NCO's on our annual NCOER. But how many of us truly know and more importantly live the Army Values. The Army Values are more than just a catch phrase or a recited answer during a board. They are a code of ethics for a healthy, more satisfying lifestyle. They are as applicable to our lives as husbands, fathers and citizens as they are to our lives as Soldiers, leaders and battle buddies. Two of the Army Values, Honor and integrity, live deep with the heart of every Soldier. They show themselves quietly in everything we do and every decision that we make. Don't just repeat the Army Values- live them.

Honor is living up to the Army Values. It starts with being honest with one's self and being truthful and sincere in all of our actions. As General Douglas MacArthur once said "the untruthful soldier trifles with the lives of his countrymen and the honor and safety of his country."

Being honest with one's self is perhaps the best way to live the Army Values. If something does not feel right to you or you feel that you are having to compromise your values, then you need to seriously assess the situation and take steps to correct or report the issue. Pressures that can challenge our ethical reasoning include self-interest, peer pressure, pressure from subordinates or pressure from superi-

ors. Honor is defined as living up to the Army values. Maintaining respect, consideration, integrity, honesty and nobleness will ensure that you and your military organization will reflect great honor for your fellow soldier, the nation, state, and local community.

Integrity means to firmly adhere to a code of moral and ethical principles. Every soldier must possess high personal moral standards and be honest in word and deed. Living and speaking with integrity is very hard. You must live by your word for everything, no buts, no excuses. Having integrity and being honest in every-

thing you say and do builds trust.

For example, you forget to lock your car and your field equipment is stolen. If you do not accept responsibility for the loss and instead decide to stretch the truth and you are found out, your integrity will be questioned from that moment on. Integrity is the basis for trust and confi-

dence that must exist among members of the Army. It is the source for great personal strength and is the foundation for organizational effectiveness.

As leaders, all soldiers are watching and looking to see that you are honest and live by your word. If you make a mistake, you should openly acknowledge it, learn from it, and move forward.



Task Force 1-6

Infantry Commander



TF 1-6 IN

Dear Families, Friends, and Soldiers of Task Force 1-6,

The pace has not slowed down one bit for Task Force 1-6. As we continue to defeat the enemy in our area, we continue to build a stronger local government, economy, and Iraqi Army. We are making a difference but it comes at a cost.

Though we have had numerous successes we suffer from the loss of one of our own. Corporal Carlo Alfonso, a Combat Engineer with A Company, 40th Engineers, gave his life

keeping the roads clear of IEDs for the entire Brigade Combat Team. We will never forget his sacrifice and I ask that you continue to pray for his wife, Rose and his stepson, Kyle. We conducted a memorial ceremony both here and back in Baum-

holder to pay a final tribute to our fallen comrade. Earthquake continues to clear the roads for the entire Brigade with the intestinal fortitude to complete every mission. They are amazing.

Private First Class Christopher Bartkiewicz, a Soldier in Alpha Company 1-6 Infantry Regiment, also gave his life on Sept. 30, in our fight for Iraqi freedom.

In partnership with the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Special Forces, we have detained dozens of what we call "high value targets" from enemy cells that are respon-

sible for IEDs and attacks against coalition forces. This has made a significant impact on the enemy's capability. But we have more to do and we are increasing our efforts. We are steadily increasing in paying out rewards to local citizens who have reported significant IED and weapon caches as well as information leading to capture of enemy leaders. People continue coming forward with information, the markets are busier than ever, and we even opened two pools that have been

refurbished after being closed for 6 years. You may have seen one of the pool grand openings on CNN as the only open pool in Sadr City. We could not have done any of his without our Soldiers'

hard work in the scorching heat and black of night. You are truly incredible.

The Task Force has managed to grow some roots and have not had any company moves in the last month. We did have a senior leader change, 1SG Morton leaves us and heads to work up at the 2 BCTs HQs, 1st Armored Division. He made a significant impact and made a difference for the Soldiers of A Company 1-6 and I know that he will make a difference at Brigade. We thank him for his tremendous efforts for this Task Force.



He is replaced by 1SG Harris who comes in from Hohenfels, Germany. We welcome him and his family to the *Regular* Team.

Please share in my congratulations to four of our senior leaders in the Task force that accomplished a significant milestone in their careers; 1SG Mizell, 1SG Copridge, 1SG Tuck, and MSG Martinez all were selected to Sergeant Major! They have reached the top of the enlisted ranks and have earned it. Well done.

I am very proud of all we have accomplished in the first 5 months and though there are a lot more problems to solve, Regulars, you are the solution. Thanks for your efforts to make a difference everyday. To our families back home, thanks for your support and prayers. Please keep it up. Though we are apart, we need you in order for us to be successful. I am forever grateful.

Soldiers and Families, don't forget to request absentee ballots in order to vote at <http://www.fvap.gov> It is too easy to do.

Also, be sure you check out our website for pictures and the *Regular Times*, our monthly newsletter from the front at http://www.1ad.army.mil/2ndBde/1_6IN/1_6tfregulars_home.htm

REGULARS, BY GOD!!

Brian S. Elfier
Lieutenant Colonel
Infantry
Commanding



Corporal Carlo Alfonso, a Combat Engineer with A Company, 40th Engineers (Courtesy photo)

Private First Class Christopher Bartkiewicz, a Soldier with A Company, 1-6 Infantry Regiment (Courtesy photo)



CSM Dwight P. Dooley, Task Force 1-6 Infantry Command Sergeant Major (Courtesy photo)



TM Rock in Salman Pak

By CPT

Will Richardson

A different kind of operation



TF 2-6 IN

It looks more like FBI or SWAT counter-drug operations than classic infantry operations being conducted in Salman Pak, Iraq. The Soldiers of Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion 6th Infantry look like typical American infantrymen. But the Soldiers of Team Rock have been conducting operations that are critical to success in counter-insurgency operations; operations which require much more precision and restraint in terms of violence of action.

An insurgent wakes up in the morning to a 19 year old Rock Soldier wearing night vision goggles, rifle at the ready and is not afforded the opportunity to resist. Another insurgent has his favorite television show cut short by a TM Rock platoon as they filed into his house without he or his family knowing until it was too late for him to attempt to escape. Conducting precision operations in this manner is how TM

Rock prefers to operate but they are always prepared to shoot if the situation requires. The company has not been involved in many gunfights, but CPT Will Richardson the TM C commander is perfectly fine with that. "If operations are planned well enough in this (COIN) environment, we shouldn't have to fire a round. The job gets done without anyone getting hurt. I'll be happy if we do not award another CIB for getting shot at or attacked by an IED, but I think that every Soldier that has stacked outside of a building without knowing what's inside, and has the courage to go in anyway; deserves to be awarded the CIB or CAB."

TM Rock has captured 24 insurgents and has discovered 6 caches in the last month while conducting precision operations. This precise method is a departure from the methods utilized in the past that

disrupted entire neighborhoods, infuriating the population to find a single cache or insurgent. Precision operations has allowed Charlie company to be successful in winning over the population of Salman Pak but has not earned them many combat awards or press coverage. If things continue positively in Salman Pak, TM Rock can look back on their performance and know they were effective in making the Marquez Mada'in a better place.



CPT Will Richardson briefs CPT Walid, Tank BN 35th IA BDE, on the plan to search for weapons/media caches after conducting a raid which netted 6 insurgents. (U.S. Army Courtesy photo)



Self-sustaining Security

By CPT
Daniel McKeel



TF 1-35 AR

It is early evening in Tameem, a small city of about 40,000 citizens in the Mada'in Qada of Iraq. The market is bustling, and people are heading home from work, running errands, or just hanging out at shop fronts and street corners now that the extreme heat of mid-day is starting to wear off. All of a sudden, several children take off down the block. They all run up smiling and waving and crowd around a group of men quietly trudging along, wearing heavy gear and carrying loaded rifles. The men stop a few moments and talk to the children and hand out candy and high-fives. These men all appear similar in their digital-patterned military uniforms, except for the fact that some are dressed in blue and black, while others are in green and tan. The men in blue are part of 3rd Brigade, Iraqi National Police, while the men in green and tan are from Attack Battery of Task Force Knight. This strange spectacle has become an ever growing familiarity in the area.



PFC Dickson, SPC Lindley, SPC Wright, SPC Hover, and PFC Vega take a moment to pose for a picture with a couple of National Police Shurta after a joint dismounted patrol. (photo taken by CPT Daniel C. McKeel)

Everywhere across Iraq, as security gains hold, the Coalition Forces (CF) and the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) work side by side on a daily basis. It began with mentoring and training by the CF, but as the ISF have rapidly gained in capability and professionalism, they have begun to take the lead. This is considered a critical step in the progress of Iraq as a country.

Self-sustaining security is the goal, and the Soldiers of Attack Battery are doing their best to help. Many of the Soldiers enjoy these patrols. Things started off difficult, with issues like separate training and of course language barriers, but after time and experience, we have overcome. After multiple large scale, joint clearing operations, and working together progressively more and more each week, the Soldiers and NP Shurta have learned their own kind of communications. Both sides watch each other constantly, and as such, both learn something. The Iraqi Shurta learn technical skills and professionalism, while the Soldiers of Attack enhance their language skills or learn small nuances of the culture that can pay large dividends down the road.

Everyday, across the Iron Knight area of responsibility, American Soldiers from Attack, Aggressors, and Warrior Companies are teaming with Iraqi counterparts. While the terrain or town name may be different, the experiences are often quite similar. These joint patrols may be unfamiliar to Soldiers from earlier deployments to OIF, but they are making a huge impact on the possibility of a stable future for the people of Iraq. It is also received quite well by the local population. It is important for the local people to see their own keeping them secure. As the 3rd Brigade and the Task Force Knight continue to work together, the future looks bright for the Mada'in Qada.



We are Team Enabler

By SPC
Bradley Downey



TF 4-27 FA

There is one small Iraqi town, just East of Baghdad, which is rarely seen in the mainstream media. Its name is Narhwan, and the Soldiers of Team Enabler patrol the town and the surrounding area on a daily basis. Team Enabler's primary focus is conducting security for Task Force Thunders Civil Affairs and Psychological Operation teams. The Soldiers are trained and equipped just like a Command Security Detachment and provide escort security for some of the Task Force's most highly visible missions. The missions focus on Narhwan's infrastructure and ways that Coalition Forces can assist the local Iraqis in rebuilding their community and creating a higher quality of life for their citizens.

The areas the Soldiers patrol can present some unique problems. In the town of Narhwan, there are numerous make-shift power lines that hang low over routes of travel. The gunners have to stop and physically move power lines away

from the vehicles to prevent them from catching on the gunners hatch; resulting in the lines being torn down or the gunners potentially getting electrocuted. Although the power lines present a significant danger to the team, they prefer not to tear them down. Destroying sources of electricity within the community would result in a step backwards towards good public relations between Task Force 4-27 and the citizens.

The children of Narhwan also present a unique challenge when it comes to security. Many of them harbor no ill will and genuinely like Coalition Forces. The difficulty stems from the sheer number of children who gather around the team, asking for water, toys, watches, pens, eye protection, and anything else that pops into their minds. Their close proximity to the Soldiers can be distracting, and makes it extremely difficult for Soldiers to scan their sector. It is something that Soldiers have come to expect, and show their goodwill.

Overall, the Soldiers of Team Enabler are happy with their assignment. The general consensus is that they enjoy what they do, and they feel they are making a difference in the lives of the Iraqi citizens they support. And remember, the next time you hear about a school that received supplies or a small village that now has water, do not forget about the Soldiers sitting in the gunners hatches, patrolling the crowded markets on foot, and scanning rooftops in order to ensure that this is getting done safely.



SFC Wimmer talks to a local Sheik at the Hollandia Medical Clinic. (Courtesy photo by SSG Timothy Collier)



Late Night Glory in Baghdad

By 1LT
Daniel Duffy



TF 4-27 FA

It was the night of 12 August 2008 and 2nd Brigade Combat Team's intelligence just informed Task Force 4-27 that the number two man on 4th Brigade, 10th Mountain Divisions "most wanted" list was lurking in their Operating Environment. For a period of 72 hours, Third Platoon, B/4-27FA, was placed on alert, anticipating confirmed intelligence to action the target. Soldiers' remained vigilant, sleep was foregone, and Bear Soldiers were eager to prove themselves in their first major operation. While waiting to receive the mission, Bravo Soldiers kept their focus and motivation by conducting rehearsals and making preparations for "H-hour". H-hour is military slang for the time to action a mission. Finally, on the night of 15 August the commander's phone rang. The location of the target was confirmed and the platoon mobilized.

Third Platoon maneuvered through the dark and dusty streets of Eastern Baghdad, and surrounded the safe house of the target. Sergeant Raymond Reed's four-man stack team assembled, breached the door, and entered the suspect's hideout. The team quickly secured the house and gathered all occupants from within for questioning. All that is . . . except one.

The intended target tried to avoid the carefully laid cordon by escaping, in the dark, through a back alleyway. SPC Rigel Walker, a sharp-eyed member of the inner cordon noticed the getaway and immediately alerted the team. SGT Raymond Reed, SPC Trevor Trepanier, and



SGT Reed, PV2 Cook, SPC Walker, and SPC Trepanier receive impact awards in front of their peers. (Courtesy photo by CPT Justin Watson)

PV2 Benjamin Cook gave chase. Despite the desert heat, unfamiliar surroundings, and fifty pounds of gear, SGT Reed and his contingent closed the gap and cornered the target. The suspect ignored all attempts at peaceful detention. SGT Reed was forced to physically apprehend him.

For their courageous pursuit and capture of 4th Brigade, 10th Mountain Divisions number two most wanted man, SGT Reed's team was formally recognized for their actions in front of their peers. All four Bear Soldiers received impact awards for their bravery and exceptional conduct on that night. SPC Trepanier, SPC Walker, and PV2 Cook received the Army Achievement Medal, and their team leader SGT Reed, was awarded the Army Commendation Medal.



Engineer Capabilities:



By CPT
John Holcombe

The Husky

For those that live at Forward Operating Base Hammer and other operating bases within 2nd Brigade Combat Team's operating environment, you might have seen a strange looking vehicle and asked yourself the question, "What is that *thing* called and what is it used for?" That *thing* is called a *Husky* and it's just one of the many pieces of equipment utilized by the Bravo Company, 40th Engineer Battalion's Route Clearance Teams.

The Husky was developed in the 1990's by Rolling Stock Division (RSD), the military division of the DCD-Dorbyl company located in South Africa. It was a partnered effort in conjunction with the South African Defense Force to conduct route clearance operations in heavily mined areas.

The Husky is designed to detect surface and subsurface conventional landmines. It is equipped with belly mounted mine detectors that scan the ground for potential landmines. The detector panels are equipped with a marking system in order to mark



The Bravo Company Husky leads the way as it receives cheers from local Iraqi children as part of a Bravo Company, 40th Engineer Battalion convoy.. (U.S. Army Courtesy photo by SPC Joshua Ramey)

"suspected mines." Once a mine is detected, it is cleared by either an engineer sapper squad or a series of heavy trailers known as a *Duisendpoot*. These heavy trailers are designed to take a blast by a conventional landmine and only shear a wheel off when the mine detonates. The repair for the battle damage is quick and the Husky is able to continue mission after less than a few minutes of repair. Additionally, the Husky can carry its own spare parts on the trailers while on missions, making it a critical combat asset.

Use of the Husky in today's defense against IED's is slightly different. IED's in Iraq and Afghanistan are not predominately conventional landmines, but rigged military grade munitions, home made explosives, and the home made explosive formed penetrator known as the EFP. The vehicle can scan the ground for buried objects and the single operator can visually scan the road and ditches for suspicious objects. The Huskies that Striker Brigade has are equipped with a mechanical arm and a camera in order to assist with interrogations, in a setup similar to the Buffalo arm (another vehicle in the route clearance fleet).

The Husky is a highly survivable vehicle designed to resist all types of IED's and attacks. It is designed to protect its single operator from a strike against anything the enemy uses. It is often used as the spearhead of route clearance missions. It is the most survivable piece of equipment in the route clearance fleet and it is easy and quick to repair compared to the other equipment.

Continue to thank route clearance patrols for their part in the IED fight. It is a daunting task that Bravo Company, 40th Engineer Battalion Soldiers perform on a daily basis.



Support In



40 EN

By SFC
Joseph Locklear

Support Out

On any given day the mechanics of Task Force Ram encounter many different maintenance faults on various pieces of equipment. Their problem solving skills are put to the test and young Soldiers are able to fix mechanical defaults without any hesitation and an immense amount of initiative. It is imperative that mechanical defaults are fixed in a timely manner due of the up-tempo of mission support.

Mission Support is the mechanics' sole purpose in Task Force Ram. This seems to be a very small task from an outsider's per-

spective, but given harsh sandstorms and temperatures ranging from 100 - 120 degrees, life can become incredibly difficult and demanding for mechanics, welders and machinists. For the mechanics of the Task Force, getting down and dirty to replace broken parts, are only one portion of getting the job done. They ensure correct parts are ordered and that each piece of equipment is ordered against the correct priority, to ensure speedy delivery. This aspect of the job can at times be challenging since the Army and its equipment is always evolving.

Ssg Willard Wilson fixes the air conditioner hose for the drash trailer, in order to maintain a cool area for mechanics. (U.S. Army courtesy photo by CPT Malia Kekuewa)



To alleviate some of these struggles, Task Force Ram mechanics also work hand-in-hand with specialized contractors to assist in training the mechanics on diagnostic troubleshooting and identifying faults and fault codes. Management Technologies (MANTEC) located on FOB Hammer, for example,

specializes in Route Clearance Maintenance. They work with Task Force Ram mechanics to ensure that its Route Clearance equipment, a brigade asset, is not dead lined for more than 24 hours, depending on the fault. Occasionally, mechanics and their supervisors have to travel to VBC in order to get a specific replacement part back to the Task Force Ram motor pool in a timely manner.

The mechanics are not the only Soldiers who are challenged daily with these vital tasks. Welders, machinists, and power generations specialists have a key part to play. Their mission is to fabricate special tools, brackets, and some force protection components. Many of the vehicles and equipment are contracted through civilian manufacturers, and though they are tested before they arrive to theater, they not always prepared for the mission. When this happens, Task Force Ram relies on the machinists and welders to add armor and repair battered or worn metal components on the equipment. They also replace lights, extra armor, mine rollers and



Spc. Matthew Gomez fixes the hinge of M1165 during motor stables. (U.S. Army courtesy photo by Cpt. Malia Kekuewa)

other IED defeat mechanisms on a daily basis, to vehicles without devaluing the integrity of the armor.

The allied trades section not only work on vehicles, but they also have a special project section where they fabricate metal signs and different projects for Task Force Ram and 2nd Brigade Combat Team. An expert welder, Spc. Blake Cyrus was personally asked by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team Command Sergeant Major, to fabricate an Iron Brigade sign using scrap metal. For his professional and specialized work, he was commended by the Brigade Command Team and received a Striker 6 coin. For several mechanics like those in Task Force Ram, doing their job is an extremely vital process, but often overlooked area, as part of the Global War on Terrorism. However, they understand the importance of what they do, the importance of support in a combat mechanized world, and they take a great deal of pride in their work.



The Iraqi Engineers

By 1LT

Kevin Lucciola



47 FSB

The Iraqi Truck Platoon and the Iraqi Engineer Platoon played a crucial role during recent operations in the Striker OE. In order to open up ground re-supply routes, the Iraqi Engineer Platoon provided heavy earth moving capability. They used their bulldozer and their bucket loader to assist TF RAM in building a bridge over a canal to clear a path for the numerous Combat Logistics Patrols that would soon be rolling across it to reinforce the air assault.

The Iraqi Engineers also were critical in establishing a PB for TF Petro and the adjacent fire base for the TF 4-27 Paladin Battery. The engineers leveled the ground, and then filled HESCO baskets to create the perimeter of the Patrol Base. They also moved tons of earth during this operation that included building a berm around the firing position. They were continuously used for position improvement

while assisting 2BCT forces.

Something that is overlooked about the Iraqi Engineer Platoon is they are among the first assets on the ground at the beginning of any major build up. Keeping true to their traditional use, the engineer assets were among the first on the ground to construct Patrol Bases in the extended AO. The Iraqi engineers were used to improve the traffic-ability of the routes. The engineers also provided a great capability in assisting with the recovery of battle damaged vehicles with their cranes. The Iraqi Truck platoon pushed equipment and supplies daily to the objective. They were the prime mover of CLIV Barrier material in support of the PB construction. In total the Iraqi truck platoon pushed 58 truck loads of equipment and supplies to the forward Patrol Bases during the build-up phase of the operation. The truck platoon drove on

some of the least improved and most dangerous routes that the 2BCT has encountered thus far operating in civilian trucks and equipment. The support from the Iraqi Truck and Engineer platoons had a huge impact on the success of the operation.



Soldiers pay tribute to fellow Soldier During ceremony at COP Carver



By PFC
Evan Loyd

1LT Joseph Schlichter and SSG Nathan Holtgrewe Soldiers from Task Force 2-6 Infantry Regiment render their final salute to the memorial for 1^{LT} Thomas J. Brown during a ceremony held at Combat Outpost Carver Iraq, by friends and fellow Soldiers on Sept. 30. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)

First Lieutenant Thomas J. Brown was memorialized during a ceremony at Combat Outpost Carver, Iraq, by friends and fellow Soldiers on Sept. 30.

Brown, a Rifle Platoon Leader for Alpha Company, Task Force 2-6 Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, died from wounds suffered when his patrol was attacked while on a mission in Hilaliyah, Iraq.

"Despite the tremendous efforts of our first responders, medics and doctors, the wounds of 1LT Brown were too great for emergency life-saving measures to be effective," said LTC Michael Shrout, commander of Task Force 2-6, which is currently providing security in the town of Salman Pak southeast of Baghdad.

Brown was born on March 13, 1982. He graduated from George Mason University in 2004, receiving a Bachelor of Arts in government and international politics. He was commissioned through the Officer Candidate School in the United States Army on 13 April 2006 as an Infantry Officer. He graduated Infantry Officer Basic Course in 2006 at Fort Benning, Georgia.

"There are no words that could fairly or accurately describe how we feel



Seven soldiers from the Task Force 2-6 Infantry fire a 21 gun salute in tribute to 1LT Thomas J. Brown during a ceremony held at Combat Outpost Carver Iraq, by friends and fellow Soldiers on Sept. 30. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)

about the loss of this great officer," said 1LT Joseph Schlichter, a platoon leader with headquarters and headquarters company, Task Force 2-6. "He was motivated and focused. His determination would last even till his last day."

Soldiers who spoke at the memorial remembered Brown's love of his job and his commitment to the Soldiers under his command.

"1LT Brown wanted to be an Infantry leader more than anything. Tom wanted to make a difference in people's lives," said Shrout. "Whether it was a middle of the night fire mission or an early morning EOD escort patrol, Tom was always there leading from the front never asking a Soldier to do anything that he wasn't willing to do himself."

Soldiers who spoke at the memorial remembered Brown's innate ability to

make anyone smile despite the worst situation.

"He could bring love to an embarrassing situation and come out making people smile," said Schlichter.

As Soldiers solemnly remembered their comrade, Shrout reminded them what was most important to Brown.

"He loved his soldiers. He loved his profession, and he showed it in the way he lived," said Shrout.

Soldiers from the Alpha Company, Task Force 2-6 Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, that worked alongside 1LT Thomas J. Brown remember their fallen comrades during a moment of silence during a ceremony held at Combat Outpost Carver Iraq, by friends and fellow Soldiers on Sept. 30. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)





Heroes of the Diamond visit Battlefield Heroes

By PFC
Evan Loyd

Former major league players Sterling Hitchcock, Dean Palmer and Andy Ashby pose for a photo with three Iron Brigade Soldiers during a morale-boosting visit to Forward Operating Hammer, Iraq, Sept. 23. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)

The Heroes of the Diamond Tour brought three retired Major League Baseball players to FOB Hammer, Iraq, Sept. 23.

The Morale, Welfare and Recreation-sponsored event featured Dean Palmer, Detroit Tigers third baseman; Sterling Hitchcock, New York Yankees pitcher; and Andy Ashby, San Diego Padres pitcher.

This wasn't the first time Palmer has

gone on tour to visit deployed Soldiers.

"I went on a tour in Afghanistan in May. It was a great trip, and I met some great people," said Palmer. "It felt so good I wanted to do more."

The Pro Sports MVP tours, provide soldiers an opportunity to get autographs, photographs swap stories with professional athletes.

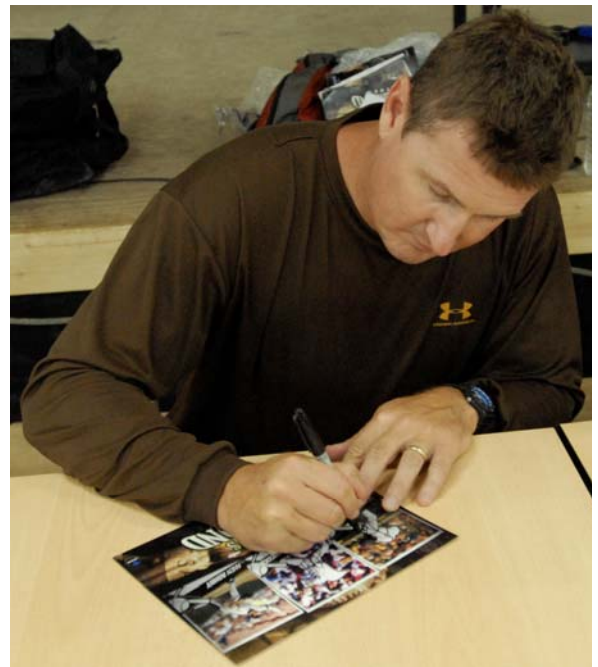
"It's inspirational to know that people back home who are heroes can come over here and know that America still supports its troops," said PFC Colt Southon, from Great Falls, Mont., a Soldier in 4-27 Field Artillery

While the soldiers enjoyed the stories, the players were in turn impressed by the soldiers' daily sacrifices.

"It's a great opportunity to give something back to the troops," said Ashby. "It means a lot to me to actually see what the troops are going through."

The Heroes of the Diamond Tour will be touring Iraq for ten days total and then will return home. They say the Soldiers might be out of sight but never out of mind.

"I pray for their safety and thank them for being out here fighting for our freedom," said Ashby.

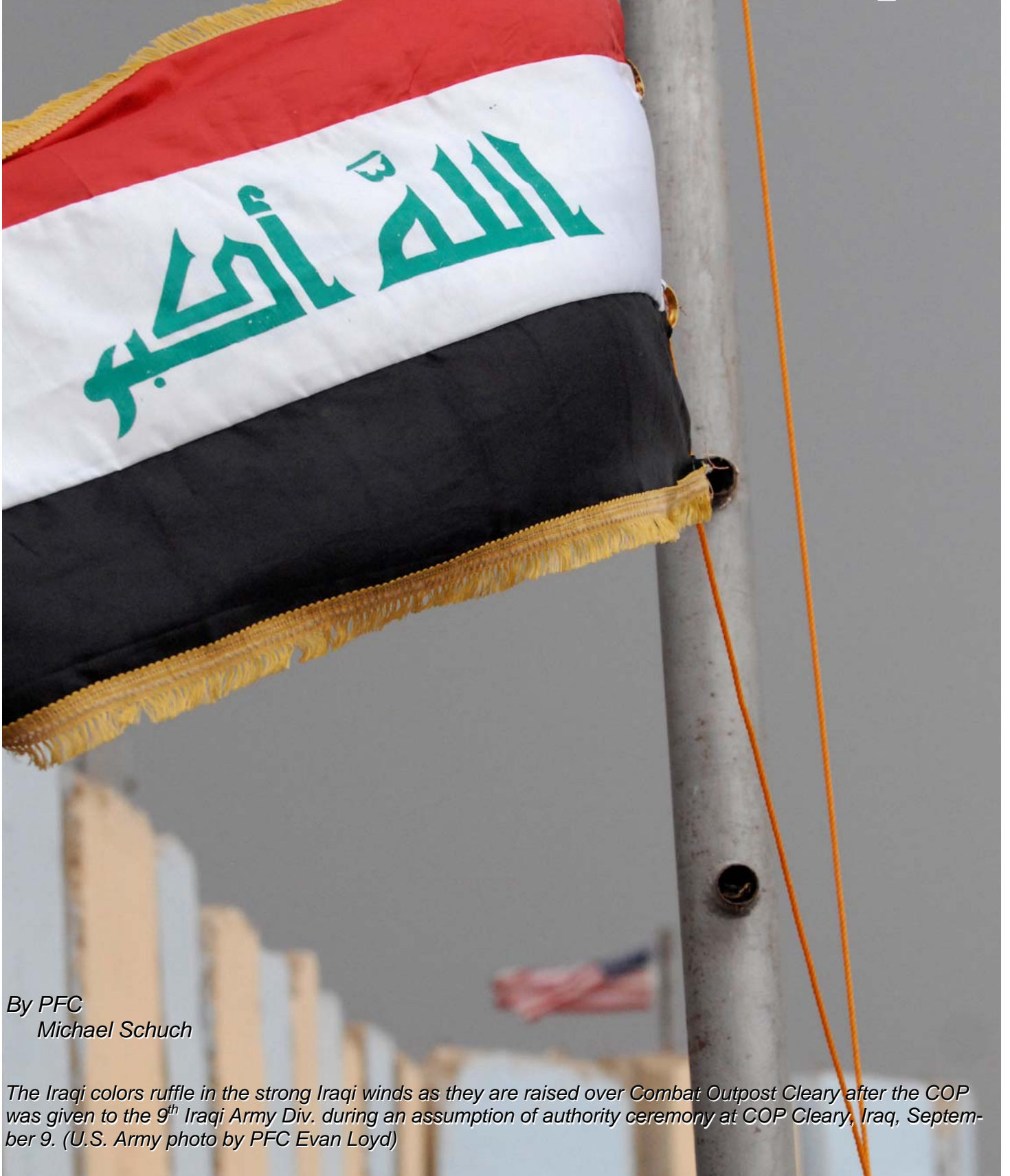


Former major league player Dean Palmer signs an autograph to be given to an Iron Brigade Soldier during a morale-boosting visit to Forward Operating Hammer, Iraq, Sept. 23. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)

Former major league pitcher Andy Ashby autographs a baseball for an Iron Brigade Soldier during a morale-boosting visit to Forward Operating Hammer, Iraq, Sept. 23. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)



Iraqi Army assumes control of Coalition Force's combat outpost



By PFC
Michael Schuch

The Iraqi colors ruffle in the strong Iraqi winds as they are raised over Combat Outpost Cleary after the COP was given to the 9th Iraqi Army Div. during an assumption of authority ceremony at COP Cleary, Iraq, September 9. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)



Staff COL Abati and rifleman from the Iraqi color guard salute after the raising of the Iraqi colors completing the assumption of authority ceremony held at Combat Outpost Cleary, Iraq, September 9. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Michael Schuch)

In a growing trend, Coalition Forces have handed over yet another combat outpost to the Iraqi army. On September 9, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, handed authority of Combat Outpost Cleary to soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 34th Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division.

Joyous Iraqi soldiers of the 4th Bat., 34th Bde., 9th IA Div. celebrated with songs and dance after the Iraqi flag was raised and unfurled signifying Iraqi authority over the outpost.

A large contingent of Iraqi media was on hand for the event, along with a large crowd of soldiers and leaders of the 9th IA Div., local sheiks and local government leaders.

This is an important event in the Mada'in Qada. It illustrates the success the CF have had in securing the populace. Violent attacks against CF and Iraqi Security Forces have dropped to an average of less than one attack per day. This is due in large part to the combined actions of CF, ISF and Sons of Iraq. The ISF have increased in professionalism and their ability to plan, prepare and execute offensive operations on their own.

Three Iraqi children carried the Iraqi flag to an honor guard detail, which marched precisely to the flag pole amid the Iraqi National Anthem being played by the band.

The transfer of authority emphasizes the transformation of the area. The same area that one year ago was home to heavy violence is now a calm and peaceful place with the Iraqi Army conducting the security operations in the area.

Through their actions they have proven their skills and demonstrated their ability to defend their people, keeping the area free of extremist forces.

The Iraqi Army will now be able to operate out of COP Cleary, providing the citizens of the area another stronghold of protection, offering faster response times and even more security than previously possible.

MG Qassim, Commander of the 9th Iraqi Army Div., then spoke to the IA soldiers who proceeded to happily celebrate this step in the Iraqi Security Forces taking an ever greater lead in providing security for Iraq.



Several Iraqi media broadcasters, a small portion of the media on hand, setup their camera equipment in preparation for an assumption of authority ceremony at Combat Outpost Cleary, Iraq, September 9. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Michael Schuch)

Staff GEN Qassim passes the Iraqi colors to Staff COL Abati, Battalion Commander of the 4th Battalion, 34th Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Div., to be hung, signaling the 9th Iraqi Army Div. assuming authority of Combat Outpost Cleary during an assumption of authority ceremony at COP Cleary, Iraq, September 9. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Michael Schuch)



Iron Soldiers observe a day of remembrance



By PFC
Michael Schuch

LTC Matthew Eichburg, of Warren, Mich., and other Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, reflect during a moment of silence at a prayer breakfast held at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, September 11. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC Evan Loyd)

Soldiers throughout the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division came together in a day of remembrance for the tragic events that occurred seven years ago on September 11, 2001.

From those who witnessed the events to those Soldiers who lost friends or family members, each shares an unconditional bond answering their country's call in the most selfless manner.

Coming together from every corner

of the United States and from all walks of life, these brave men and women have come together to join the war on terror with the 2nd BCT, 1st AD, to help prevent similar tragedies around the world.

"I was at home raking leaves when I first heard the news," said SGT James Laban, of Vailoa, Samoa. "I was getting ready to enter the Army, so it really made me feel like I was doing something to help. It really made me glad I had joined."



Soldiers were invited to a prayer breakfast during the early morning to come together to remember those who had fallen. Col. Pat White, Commander of the 2nd BCT, 1st AD, was a guest speaker at the event.

"We're all grateful for your service and patriotism every day, but it truly stands out as we mark the 7th anniversary of September 11," said COL Pat White, of Apple Valley, Calif.

Soldiers went on with their day, each remembering the call to duty they felt that day seven years prior with a refreshed intensity.

"When I saw the planes hit on the news, I was shocked, angry and confused, but I felt I had to do something about it," said SPC Jon Ritch, of Baltimore, Md. "The events of that day were what made me join the Army. I am glad I did."

Soldiers of the 2nd BCT, 1st AD came together once more that evening for a concert performed by XII Lead, a band composed of Iron Soldiers.

The musicians performed a series of songs, honoring the fallen and explaining the sacrifices each Soldier continues to make every day they don their uniform.

"I was two days 19 when the planes flew into the towers, working a nothing job



COL Pat White, of Apple Valley, Calif., speaks at a prayer breakfast held at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, September 11. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)



SPC Timothy Coyne, of Valley City, OH, sings backup vocals for Tears, a song written by fellow members of XII Lead, a band composed of Soldiers from the 2nd BCT, 1st AD, during a memorial concert held at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, September 11. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Michael Schuch)

in a nothing town, yet somehow I knew the world had changed," said SPC Michael Woywood, lead singer of XII Lead, from San Antonio, TX.

"It was a defining moment, I think, for a lot of us. It was probably the defining moment of our generation," said Woywood. "All of us at some time or another heard the call after the events of September 11, 2001. For many of us, this is not our first go-round. Every time we have to deploy to a foreign country to fight an enemy, we all have to sacrifice a little bit of something."

"For most of us, that something is in the form of a someone that we will have to say goodbye to," said Woywood. "For most of us, that has become a way of life."

Each Soldier in attendance stood for a moment of silence for the men and women lost when the towers fell, the sacrifices each has made and in honor of our fallen friends and comrades since arriving in Iraq five months ago.

The events held at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, prove that no matter where you may be in the world, nor what you may be doing, September 11th is a day that will forever live in the hearts and minds of every American.

"When it finally sank in what had happened, I was pretty devastated," said SPC Kip Bonds, of Kansas City, Mo. "September 11th was what made me decide to join the Army. I am thankful each day that I joined, because I feel like I am making a difference."



SSG Dennis Voltz, of Buffalo, N.Y., reads a scripture passage at a prayer breakfast held at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, September 11. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC Evan Loyd)

SPC Michael Woywood, of San Antonio, TX, sings Tears, a song written by him and fellow members of XII Lead, a band composed of Soldiers from the 2nd BCT, 1st AD, during a memorial concert held at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, September 11. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Michael Schuch)



Operation Northern Exposure sends message to extremists



By PFC
Michael Schuch

SPC David Walls, of Detroit, Mich., calls a command to his military working dog as she searches the area for weapons and explosives during Operation Northern Exposure in Umm al Abid, Iraq, September 5. Operation Northern Exposure is meant to disrupt support for al Qaeda in Iraq and other extremist groups operating in the Diyala province in an effort to prevent future attacks such as this. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Michael Schuch)

Soldiers from Company A and B, 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regt., conducted an extensive search through a major canal in Umm al Abid, Iraq, as part of Operation Northern Exposure September 5.

The search was initiated after the area had been used numerous times before for emplacing improvised explosive devices aimed at Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces, while causing great risk and destruction to the area and its inhabitants.

Operation Northern Exposure is in response to extremist activity in the Diyala province and is meant to disrupt support and freedom of maneuver for al Qaeda in Iraq and other extremists

groups attempting to operate in the area.

The search began just after 3 A.M., allowing the Soldiers the opportunity to travel under the cover of darkness and out of the intense heat of the Iraqi sun.

After a short link-up with members of the 3-1 National Police at Patrol Base Jaguar, the combined element moved 600 meters north to the site of the canal, which spanned a massive 4 and a half kilometers.

The men split into several groups to quickly scour the canal and surrounding area looking for any disturbances to the land, possible hidden weapons caches or IEDs.



Two Soldiers, SPC Eiburcio Bazante, of Madera, Calif., and SPC Paul Paiva, of Pittsburgh, Pa, and two Iraqi National Police Shurtas entered the heavily overgrown canal with a metal detector as several other Soldiers provided overhead security from atop the berm surrounding the Canal.

Simultaneously, a large group of Soldiers and Shurta combed through the brush-covered desert floor as the rising sun beat down upon them.

As the men searched the land surrounding the canal, however, they discovered numerous perfectly-shaped fighting positions were dug into the ground, positioned with a clear view of the road traveling through the area. Though based on the growth of vegetation inside the positions, it was determined they had not been used in some time.

The tail section of a rocket was also discovered by a Shurta and was immediately secured by a Soldier to be delivered for disposal to the unit's explosives ordnance disposal team.

After the first section of canal had been searched, LTC Rich Morales, of El Paso, TX, ordered for the overgrown vegetation inside the



SPC Eiburcio Bazante, of Madera, Calif., uses a metal detector to search through a canal as SPC Paul Paiva, of Pittsburgh, Pa., provides security for him during Operation Northern Exposure in Umm al Abid, Iraq, September 5. Operation Northern Exposure is meant to disrupt support for al Qaeda in Iraq and other extremist groups operating in the Diyala province in an effort to prevent future attacks such as this. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Michael Schuch)

SSG Dehan Aquino, of New York City, N.Y., provides overhead security from atop a berm surrounding the canal being searched during Operation Northern Exposure in Umm al Abid, Iraq, September 5. Operation Northern Exposure is meant to disrupt support for al Qaeda in Iraq and other extremist groups operating in the Diyala province in an effort to prevent future attacks such as this. (U.S. Army photo by PFC MichaelSchuch)



canal to be burned.

Burning vegetation inside the canals destroys the weeds used to camouflage weapons and munitions, ruining it as a hiding place for caches of weapons. Burning the vegetation also makes your presence in the area known to any villagers and possible extremists in the area.

"Burning it (the vegetation) sends the message you're here," said Morales, Commander of Task Force 1-35 AR. "Someone may be watching us now as we operate, or they may not, but if you burn it, they know you were here."

The Agriculture Director General of Baghdad province meets with local Mada'in Qada farmers

By PFC
Evan Loyd

Agriculture is the foundation of employment in the Mada'in Qada. On Sept. 17th Dr. Ayad Hassan Abid Radhi, the Ministry of Agriculture Director General of the Baghdad Province met with farmers of the Mada'in Qada province.

Dr. Ayad first talked with members of the Qarguliyah Agriculture Association. The QAA is comprised of local farmers who work together to try and facilitate access to credit and sharing of farm equipment. They discussed the new techniques that the coalition forces introduced during the last growing season and future plans for their continued use.



Dr. Ayad Hassan Abid Radhi, the Agriculture Director General of the Baghdad Province walks with LTC Matthew Mckenna, from Pittsburgh, Penn., the deputy commander of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, while touring a local farm in the Mada'in Qada on Sept. 17. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)



Dr. Ayad Hassan Abid Radhi, the Agriculture Director General of the Baghdad Province talks with local farmers and members of the Qargolia Agriculture Association in the Mada'in Qada on Sept. 17. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)

One of the important new techniques is drip irrigation. Drip irrigation is a way to use a minimal amount of water to get plants to grow. Rather than spraying water across the field or flooding the field, water is applied in drops from a hose to the base of the plant. This allows the plant to get the water it needs without wasting extra water on the empty ground. Since much of the area still has inconsistent canal water flowing from the Diyala River, this allows the farmers to dig a shallow well and then pump the water into their plants. This allows the farmers to water their crops even if something goes wrong with the canal system.

“Drip Irrigation gives the farmer a way not to have to depend on whether the electrical grid is up at the pump station moving canal water,” said Floyd Wood, from Washington D.C., an agricultural advisor with the coalition force in the Mada’in Qada. “A farmer now, independently, can go out and produce enough food to sell in the market, to buy fuel to run his pump, to irrigate his garden with a fifth or even less than it would take to use canal water, but the main benefit is that they are now in control of their own productivity.”

Another technique was the date palm inoculation. This was the first date palm season in which the local farmers inoculated their trees against pest. The process of inoculation of the trees consisted of drilling a small hole into the bark of the tree

and then the pesticide is inserted into the hole and flows throughout the tree and protects it from parasites. As a result this year’s date production was one of the largest ever.

“The Iraqi Farmers are hungry for technical information. They’re very intelligent and capable of learning, and they are very appreciative of what the coalition forces are doing to help them,” said Wood.

Dr. Ayad was escorted by LTC Matthew Mckenna, from Pittsburg, Penn., the deputy commander of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, and Soldiers of the deputy commander’s security detail.

Dr. Ayad Hassan Abid Radhi, the Agriculture Director General of the Baghdad Province talks with local farmers and members of the Cargolia Agriculture Association in the Mada’in Qada on Sept. 17. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)



1-3-1 NP assumes control of Combat Outpost Salie



By PFC
Michael Schuch

BG Emad, Commander of the 1-3-1 National Police, and local leaders cut the ribbon completing the ceremony transferring authority of Combat Outpost Salie from the 2nd BCT, 1st AD to the 1-3-1 NP at COP Salie, Iraq, September 16. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)

Continuing a recent trend, Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade combat Team, 1st Armored Division handed over a combat outpost to Iraqi Security Forces. On September 16, the 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, handed authority of Combat Outpost Salie to the Shurta of the 1st Battalion, 3rd National Police Brigade.

Ecstatic Shurta of the 1-1-3-1 NP celebrated the transfer of authority with songs and dance after the Iraqi flag was unfurled and raised, signifying Iraqi authority over the outpost.

This is an important event in the Mada'in Qada. Much like the recent transfers

of authority, it illustrates the success the Coalition Forces have had in securing the populace. Violent attacks against CF and Iraqi Security Forces have dropped to an average of less than one attack per day. This is due in large part to the combined actions of CF, ISF and Sons of Iraq. The ISF have increased in professionalism and their ability to plan, prepare and execute offensive operations on their own.

The transfer of authority symbolizes the transformation of the area. What was once the violent town of Narhwan is now a more stable and serene neighborhood.





National Police officers salute after the raising of the Iraqi colors completing the assumption of authority ceremony held at Combat Outpost Salie, Iraq, September 16. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)

Through their actions they have proven their skills and demonstrated their ability to defend their people, removing terrorist forces and keeping the area free of extremist activity.

The 1-3-1 NP will now be able to operate out of COP Salie, providing the citizens of the area another stronghold of protection, offering faster response times and even more security than previously possible.

Brig. Gen. Emad, Commander of the 1-3-1 NP, spoke to the Shurta in attendance as they proceeded to celebrate this huge move for the Iraqi National Police, taking an ever greater lead in providing security for the Iraqi populace.

Iraqi Shurta from the 1-3-1 National Police dance in celebration after receiving authority of Combat Outpost Salie from the 2nd Brigade combat Team, 1st Armored Division, after a transfer of authority ceremony at COP Salie, Iraq, September 16. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)





Wetzel Wizard

September 2008

Our Magic is Knowledge!

Back to School Bingo

Come join the fun on **Thursday, Sept. 18th from 4:30-6:30** in the cafeGYMatorium for a **BINGO BLOWOUT!** 10 rounds of BINGO will be available. There will be one child winner and one adult winner. Each bingo card will be one dollar. Frito Pie, drinks, and popcorn will be available for your dinner. So, come join the fun! Cards are only \$1.00 and PTO members receive one free Bingo card per family. POC- Mrs. McKenzie at mary.mckenzie@eu.dodea.edu

Operation Honor Heroes

We wanted to thank all of the families who already have submitted photos and messages for our Wetzel Hero Wall.

There is still plenty of room on our Hero Wall for pictures and messages of our soldiers. Just submit a photo of your military member with a small message and it will be posted. They do not have to be deployed.

Photos and messages can be dropped off at the office. They will remain posted on our wall for the school year and given back at the end of the year. The kids really love seeing their military dad/mom every day! Please contact ruth.jimenez@eu.dodea.edu for further information.

Support the Arts

Wetzel has many creative artists!

Throughout September and October, we will be following Hispanic Heritage month. We will be learning what language is spoken, which countries or regions are important and what types of art are created.

Students in the different grade levels will be producing such creations as maracas, "tin" suns and moons, Huichol

yarn paintings and Zapotec rugs.

Volunteers in the classroom are always welcome as are donations of art supplies. Please see Mrs. Poli for more information.

Help Support The Arts!

Mission & Goals Of WES

The mission of the Wetzel Elementary School Community is to promote an environment that enables all students to acquire the knowledge and skills to become successful life-long learners and responsible citizens in an ever-changing, global society.

Student Performance Goal #1: All students will increase their literacy skills across the curriculum. Essence: Literacy skills are defined at Wetzel Elementary School as the ability to comprehend written text and communicate ideas.

Student Performance Goal #2: All students will increase their thinking skills across the curriculum. Essence: Thinking skills are defined at Wetzel Elementary School as analyzing and interpreting information, devising strategies for solving problems and justifying solutions to problems.

Dates to Remember:

- Sept. 11 – First Day for SureStart
- Sept. 18 - PTO Welcome Back to School BINGO 4:30-6:30
- Sept. 19- Early Release @ 11:01 for Collaboration Students
- Sept. 24- Lunch and Learn @ 11:45-12:45
- Oct. 1- Box Top Collection Day
- Oct. 9- "Whirled Peace Day"- Last 15 minutes of Your Child's Lunch
- Oct. 10 - Early Release Day for Baumholder Complex
- Oct. 13 - Columbus Day – Federal Holiday
- Oct. 15- Box Top Collection Day
- Oct. 24 - Early Release @ 11:01 Collaboration Wetzel ES
- Oct. 30 - End of First Quarter
- Oct. 31 - No School for Students- Teacher Work Day



Help Needed to Support the Troops

Our BN recently had soldiers that were sent to Landstuhl and one to WRAMC in DC. Walking down the hallways in the ICU, I noticed they were missing cards and pictures. It was quite bare. I asked the nursing staff if they would be interested in having crafted cards and artwork made by children, and they said of course! It only takes a few minutes for the children to create something important for our soldiers to let them know we care. We have many children at our school that are very creative and crafty. Please take the time to make a card and send it to the POC at Wetzel ES: Cleo Strazdas.

Thank you,
Pam McGuire
Wetzel Parent

Peanut Allergies

Please no nutty snacks in classrooms - no peanut butter snacks, no items fried in peanut oil, no nut products period! We have several children who are allergic to nuts this year - some life threateningly so. AAFES school lunches have been without nuts or nut products for a couple of years following an incident in which a child eating an egg roll (fried in peanut oil) had a serious reaction. Now their egg rolls, as well as all their products, are nut free. Gloria Cheatham, RN, BSN, MS, NCSN School Nurse

School Liaison Officer

Our School Liaison Officer, Pam Johnson, is the POC of the **Free and Reduced Lunch Program**. This is a great way to reduce the cost of your child's daily lunch. There is an attachment with this Newsletter that contains the requirements. Please contact Pam Johnson at Pam-ela.Johnson10@eur.army.mil for further information.

Registrar's Remarks

Absence Notes and Policy

It is very important that students come to school everyday, even when they or other family members have appointments. Students can come to school a half a day and they will not miss out on important instructional time.

If a child is kept at home, it is mandatory to call school by 9AM to report the absence. Otherwise the school must call the student contacts to discover the child's location and reason of absence.

Student Withdrawal Process

Ten working days before your child's last day of school, give a copy of PCS orders or other moving documentation to the Registrar with student names, teachers name, and last day of Wetzel ES Attendance written at the top.

After you have followed the above directions you may:

On your child's last day of attendance at the end of the school day, come to the Registrar's office to pick up a copy of your child's school record to deliver to his/her new school.

Focus on Learning

One of our school performance goals is to increase critical thinking across the curriculum. In order to enhance our critical thinking skills, Our Literacy Teams offering a "Lunch and Learn" training for Parents and Community Members. This month's "Lunch and Learn" will be held in the Media Center on September 24 from 11:45-12:45. The topic is "Understanding Educational Terms and Acronyms". At the "Lunch and Learn", parents can enjoy a free lunch while gaining great knowledge to assist their children in the area of critical thinking. This is a great way to increase the connection between home and school learning.

Whirled Peace Day

September 21st is **International Peace day**. Schools from all around the world will be celebrating this day throughout the months of September and October. Ms. Strazdas, Mrs. Poli, Mr. Rayburn, and Mrs. Richardson would like to do something with the whole school to celebrate this hopeful day. We have coordinated our schedules to be able to work with the students on some projects in our classes so they can participate in this special day with students from around the world.

Our school will be celebrating "Whirled Peace" Day on Thursday, October 9th.

The students will create pinwheels in art and create a "Peace Book" in Enrichment prior to that day. Our whole school will take the time on the 9th to reflect on what our world would be like if we were all at peace. The pinwheels they create in art will reflect our hope of world peace and will be displayed in front of our school. In order to accomplish this project, we are asking for donations of pencils. The students will need them to make the pinwheels so they can stick in the ground. Please deliver all donations to Mrs. Poli's Art room # 114.

Please join us on October 9th for the last 15 mins. of your child's lunchtime. Thanks for participating in this special event with us. Take the time to talk to your students and children about what world peace means to them and how we need to go about accomplishing it. Please see the attached flyer for more information.

Asbestos

As an annual requirement, Department of Defense Dependents Schools are to keep parents informed of the status of asbestos in our schools. In accordance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, an initial inspection of school facility was conducted in October 2002. Follow-up inspections continue to be held every three years. Since our last inspection, no changes in the status of asbestos in our school have been reported. The only area that still contains non-friable asbestos is the boiler room in the valve assemblies. This area is not accessible to the public. Copies of the inspection reports, surveillance records, and the school management procedures are available for your review. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Balilo.

S1 Personnel

By CPT Ashley Salkowski



Death Gratuity flexibility

Have you ever considered giving your death gratuity benefits to someone other than your immediate family? Multiple changes in law now allow a Soldier the flexibility to distribute their \$100,000 Death Gratuity to up to ten different individuals in \$10,000 increments. Soldiers can elect to give the death gratuity to anyone they want including Family, friends, or even other Soldiers.

What is Death Gratuity? Death Gratuity is a one-time, non-taxable payment of \$100,000 to help survivors deal with the financial hardships that accompany the loss of a Soldier. It is a lump sum payment to the survivors or other individuals identified by the Soldier prior to death while on active duty or within 120 days after release from active duty if the death is due to a service-related disability.

A special consideration for married Soldiers is that the Army will notify a spouse when their Soldier elects someone other than the spouse to receive any part of the death gratuity. The

Army does this by sending a "Spousal Notification" letter. Even Soldiers that are "legally separated" or "pending" a divorce are still considered married, and a "Spousal Notification" letter will be sent to their spouse. The spousal notification letter does not tell a spouse who the Soldier elects to receive the death gratuity benefits or how much of the death gratuity will go to someone else, but will tell a spouse only that a Soldier elects to give a portion of the death gratuity to someone other than the spouse. To prevent confusion, surprise, or anger, it is the responsibility of the married Soldier to have a conversation with his/her spouse when making changes to the DD Form 93.

Soldiers who do not have a current Jan 08 DD Form 93 or wish to elect to change their death gratuity allocations can see their Company 1SG or Battalion S1 for information on updating their DD Form 93.



Safety Bulletin

By Jerrold Scharninghausen



Driving in the Mud

Everyone is looking forward to the rain that will cut the dust from the air, but the moon dust will continue to haunt. Once the rains begin, the moon dust will form mud that has the consistency of peanut butter and sticks to everything. This will create additional hazards for vehicles and pedestrians. Driving in mud requires vehicle operators to take into account the loss of traction that may occur. Adapting your driving habits is the best way to avoid losing traction. If traction is lost, drivers must quickly react in order to avoid going into a skid or being stuck and requiring recovery assets. Driving in mud can be compared to driving on ice. Stopping distances are greatly increased and traction may be lost at any time. Tire ruts and potholes will change the vehicles intended direction and your reaction time may not be quick enough. There are however things that you can do to increase the probability of arriving at your destination safely.

- Drive At Reduced Speeds So You Can Stop Quicker
- Give Turn Signals Sooner Than Usual. This Gives Other Drivers More Time To React
- Pump Your Brakes To Warn Of Your Intention To Stop
- Maintain At Least Triple The Normal Distance From The Vehicle Ahead.



When roads are slippery, use all of the grip available for one thing at a time. Brake only before the curve when the car is traveling straight. Taking your foot off the brake before you steer into the curve allows you to use all of the grip available for steering. Don't accelerate until you begin to straighten the steering wheel when exiting the turn. This technique will allow you to be 100% effective at each maneuver



Safety Bulletin

By Jerrold Scharninghausen



. Even taking precautions however, you can still go into an unexpected skid. If your vehicle begins to skid, take the following actions:

- Front end skids - Release the brake and let the front wheels roll freely to regain traction and steering control.
- Rear end skids – For non-ABS systems, Take your foot off of accelerator and turn the wheels in the direction that the rear end of the vehicle is skidding, and pump brakes lightly.

While all this sounds easy enough, when your mission requires you to drive through roads that look like soup, things get more complicated. If stopped by mud rolling up in front of your wheels or tracks, reverse direction immediately attempting to back out in the same tracks before they refill. If you get stuck, you will need another vehicle to pull you out, or use your winch if your vehicle is so equipped. Above all, do not rock the vehicle, this only digs it in deeper. Every military vehicle has enough power in low range to pull out of mud; provided it gets enough traction or it isn't sunk too deep. Approach soft areas at medium speed for the gear range selected and maintain a steady throttle until you reach solid ground. If you do get stuck, placing boards or brush under the tires on wheeled vehicles can help increase traction.

Lack of visibility is a leading contributor to vehicle accidents. We can't influence loss of visibility from blowing sand however, we can influence our equipment. If you need to roll out of the FOB/COP fast, there will probably not be time to make your vehicle road worthy. Every time you stop, if the situation allows, clean your windows and lights. Your ability to assess the situation depends upon your ability to see. If your windshield is dirty you will not see the IED, let alone a road hazard. Situational awareness requires work.



It is most important to remember to slow down when the roads get slippery, and to practice anticipating what could be coming around the next curve. You have no control over who is behind the wheel of that vehicle approaching you. If you are going so fast that you are on the edge of control yourself, you will have no margin of error if the other driver suddenly loses control of their vehicle. Control of the vehicle resides with the driver; don't give away your advantage.



Chaplain's Corner

By CHAP (CPT) Keith Andrews
Task Force Ram Chaplain



Cold Coffee

There is nothing worse than cold coffee.

This morning, I was drinking my morning cup when I was interrupted several times by different people coming by to visit. I always welcome those interruptions, because I enjoy the conversation and they keep me away from doing more pressing and tedious tasks.

However, when I returned to my work, I found that my coffee had grown cold—sitting under the air conditioner for an hour.

The taste was terrible—it makes me wonder why they offer cold coffee in the DFAC. I could have walked over to warm up my mug, but, I endured the taste to simply get it down my throat.

For some of us, we are living our lives like a cold cup of coffee.

We have been in Iraq for over five months and we may have allowed ourselves to become bland and cold.

Maybe it is time for a warm up.

I didn't get out of my chair to warm up my coffee because I felt too lazy to do it. Likewise, we don't take steps to reinvigorate our lives because we are simply too lazy to make a change.

So what are some ways to "warm up" your life and reenergize yourself for the rest of the deployment?

I would first recommend taking an

honest look at what you are doing on a daily basis. We all have our missions and our tasks to carry out, but what are you doing during your personal time that is draining away our energy? How are you unloading the stress that is building up in your life?

After making an honest assessment of where you are, make some decisions about what you are going to change. Ask yourself what you can do to release some of the stress that has been building up. Some ideas may include;

- Establishing a regular PT program.
- Scheduling time to watch a movie with friends.
- Planning your diet.
- Developing a reading list.
- Committing to attend chapel

It is important that each of us take the time we need to decompress some of the stress and to keep our lives engaged in the daily operations of deployment.

Is it time for you to "warm up your coffee"?

If it is, I encourage you to take action now. Your Chaplain and Chaplain's assistant stand ready to help you, to offer ideas, or to simply be a sounding board. Take a moment to speak with them today.



Striker Justice

By SGT Natasha Stevens
2nd BCT Detention Operations Paralegal NCOIC



The Future of Detention Operations in Iraq's hands

Detention Operations has had a big impact in the area that is covered by our Brigade. Upon our official takeover of the area we have detained over 70 alleged criminals. Of those 70, approximately 20 were high value targets who were primarily responsible for IED emplacement cells, organized trafficking of illegal weapons such as rockets and EFPs from Iran, large scale kidnapping, mass murder, and other crimes that had the potential to threaten the security and stability of Iraq and Coalition Forces. Even though our presence preserves the stability of Iraq and our forces our primary goal is to successfully transition our practices into Iraqi Security Force hands and allow them to facilitate and enforce their own judicial processes. One could possibly ask the question why after seven years from our initial invasion of Iraq are we trying to assist in the development of an Iraqi run law enforcement system now. The U.S. forces detention system is authorized by a United Nations resolution where the Iraqi Government has allowed U.S. Troops to arrest indi-

viduals who pose a threat to Coalition Forces. Even though our detention system utilizes Iraqi Courts it is primarily run in conjunction with U.S. Forces and not Iraqi Security Forces. On 31 December 2008, the United Nations resolution will expire which will result in Coalition Forces no longer being authorized to detain local nationals. A Status of Forces Agreement would clarify how U.S. Forces would be allowed to operate in Iraq to include the detention of local national who could possibly pose a threat. However with the expiration of the U.N. Resolution and the Status of Forces Agreement still being negotiated, the brigade is moving forward in the process of empowering Iraqi Security Forces in organizing their own systems. With the use of investigative judges, warrants for arrest written and executed by Iraqi Security Forces, and the imprisonment of criminals in Iraqi run facilities we are very close to Iraq's self governing future.



Doctor's Desk

By LTC Margaret Swanberg
47th FSB Neurologist



Oh My Aching Head

Headache is one of the most frequent complaints to a physician's office. There are several types of headache, some requiring immediate medical intervention and others that can be successfully treated without physician intervention. The more common causes of headache include migraine, tension, medication overuse, and dehydration. Recognizing triggers and symptoms of individual headaches is key to successful treatment and prevention.

Migraine headaches are caused by abnormal signals generated in the brain and result in severe headaches that are frequently on only one side of the head. The pain frequently described as a throbbing sensation can last from 60 minutes up to several hours. Patients typically feel sick to their stomach with vomiting and sensitivity to bright lights and loud sounds. Migraine headaches may be associated with other unusual symptoms including seeing bright lights or stars, loss of vision, or loss of sensation. Medications can successfully treat migraine headaches when caught early.

Tension headaches can look very similar to migraine headaches, however they are generally not as severe. The pain is typically a pressure sensation and may begin in the neck and back of the head later moving to involve the entire head. Another common location is behind or near the eyes. Tension headaches can last from several minutes to several

hours or even days and may be triggered by stress, arthritis, poor sleep and numerous other environmental factors. Medications and identification of triggers are effective in treating tension headache.

Daily or near daily headaches may also result from dehydration, sun/heat exposure, poor sleep, medications, dietary changes, and supplement use. Proper attention to possible triggers is vital to the prevention of these headaches. Things to consider when faced with a daily or near daily headache include:

- Volume status. Soldiers deployed to a hot environment should be drinking enough water and/or gatorade to turn urine light yellow or almost clear.

- Amount of sun exposure. When possible minimize sun exposure especially in midday unless the activity is mission essential.

- Medications. Daily or frequent use of medications like Motrin, Advil, Tylenol, and Goody's powder can cause a daily headache. Speak to your provider about the continued need of these drugs.

- Changes in diet. Processed foods like deli meats, bacon, and sausage cause headaches for many. Other foods linked to headache include chocolate, coffee, tea, soda/pop. Aspartame, frequently found in diet food and drinks, may also cause headaches. Whenever possible, eliminate these items from your diet to see if headaches will improve.



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Supplements. Many supplements used to lose weight, increase energy, and build muscle will also cause headaches. Carefully consider the need for continued use of these non-Food and Drug Administration approved supplements.

While most headaches are benign and of no cause for concern, there is one headache history that should prompt immediate referral and evaluation. The headache associated with subarachnoid hemorrhage is typically the absolute worst at the onset. Most patients describe the pain as intense, or being hit on the back of the head with a hammer, brick or 2 x 4. This headache is also described as “the

worst headache of my life”. Loss of consciousness is common. This headache requires urgent evaluation in the emergency room and should not be ignored.

Although headaches are quite common, there are numerous successful treatments available. Headaches do not have to interfere with quality of life or the ability to complete the mission. If you are suffering from headaches, talk to your provider about developing a personalized plan for the successful treatment of your pain. And remember, it's not always just in your head.



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Office DSN 778-7151 or carl.w.marotto@2BCT1AD.Army.Mil



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