

# THE RALLY POINT

Serving the men and women of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division  
and Multi-National Division - Baghdad in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom



Warriors  
complete  
14-month  
deployment



“Don’t  
Tread  
on  
Me”



# The Rucksack

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**HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE RAIDER BRIGADE!**



The 2nd "Warriors" Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, part of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, stationed at Fort Polk, La., will redeploy early 2009, upon completing its 14-month deployment to the Rashid district in southern Baghdad in support of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division — Baghdad and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

U.S. Army graphic by Sgt. David Hodge  
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

## THE RALLY POINT

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# LEADER'S BOOK



**Col. Ted Martin**

## *To the Soldiers of the Raider Brigade!*

As we close out 2008, it's been a very successful year — not just for the Raider Brigade but also for our Iraqi Security Forces counterparts.

We're seeing now the fruits of our hard labors and the hard labors of the Soldiers that fought in the Rashid district since the start of 2003. The coming of age of the Security Agreement will have a profound impact on the way we do business. It won't change our mission, but it will change how we

execute our mission.

The Security Agreement could never have taken place with the conditions that existed when we arrived in Iraq in March of 2008. The situation was too volatile; the security was too fragile. The enemy was still operating in strength in Baghdad, and the very tough, hard work of soldiering on in Baghdad — of working side-by-side with our ISF counterparts; of beating the enemy back at every turn; of destroying the militias; of running out of Iraq the enemy leadership, both of Al Qaeda in Iraq and the various militias, has allowed the Government of Iraq the breathing space needed to gain a foothold and lock in a tight security ring around not only Baghdad but around all the major cities in Iraq.

I think that we're seeing with this transition period, during the implementation of the Security Agreement, that we are truly moving the ISF into the lead. The Raider Brigade will move into an advisory role, while still providing all the necessary back-up and assistance as Coalition Forces and ISF continue to fight against extremists and rejectionists in the Rashid district.

The New Year also marks the departure of a great infantry battalion, the 2nd Battalion of the 4th Infantry Regiment. This fantastic unit under the leadership of Lt. Col. Tim Watson and Command Sgt. Major Brendan McIntyre has performed superbly in Rashid.

Specifically, the "Warriors" actions in East Rashid have led to the establishment of a lasting and durable security situation there. The Doura Market Complex is the jewel of Baghdad. Once the epicenter of the AQI movement, it's been totally wiped of all enemy forces, and it has been replaced with a thriving market, and a flourishing people. The more recent efforts of the Warriors, working in conjunction with the Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team, was the Doura Fine Arts Festival. This was a tremendous display of the artistic talent of Rashid in what was formally one of the most dangerous areas in Baghdad.

The 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment will be sorely missed. They have forged a great relationship with not only their ISF counterparts in the 7th Brigade, 2nd NP Division, but more important, with the people of Doura. They are respected

by all for the hard and dangerous work they have done.

The Warriors will be replaced by the Soldiers of the 1st Bn., 505th Parachute Inf. Regt., from Fort Bragg, N.C. We are happy to have them here. They are well-trained and well-led, and they will be picking up where the "Warriors" left off. We welcome them to the Raider Brigade and look forward to serving side-by-side with them.

As we move into 2009, we want to remember our comrades who made the ultimate sacrifice in 2008. We will remember their service and honor their memory as we complete our mission in Baghdad.

I wish everybody in the Raider Brigade a Happy New Year and Best Wishes for 2009! As we usher in the New Year and think about the mission ahead, we never forget about our Families and Friends back at home, and all the support they have given us. We wish them all the best in the New Year and we look forward to seeing you all very soon.

Steadfast and Loyal!  
RAIDER6



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

Sgt. James Bowhay, a cavalry scout assigned to Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, touches base with Iraqi National Police patrolmen from the 1st Battalion, 3rd Aburisha Bde., attached to the 2nd NP Div., before combined cordon and search operations Dec. 30 in the Rashid district's Abu T'shir community of southern Baghdad. The Soldiers partnered with the 3rd "Feather" Brigade to search for weapons and munitions in the predominately Shia community, as part of ongoing efforts to enforce Baghdad's Fardh al Qanoon, or Rule of Law. Under the Government of Iraq's "No Weapons" Policy, Iraqi citizens may only have one rifle or pistol, if they have a weapons permit.

# Iraqi National Police stand-up, take control

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

*Infantry Regiment leaves Doura with 'durable peace'*

The 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, part of the 10th Mountain Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team, stationed at Fort Polk, La., deployed to Doura in southern Baghdad in late November 2007 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Upon arriving at Forward Operating Base Falcon, the 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., was attached under operational control to the 4th Inf. BCT, 1st Inf. Div.; and later in April 2008, became part of the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., as part of Multi-National Division – Baghdad's main effort to provide support, stability and security for the people of the Doura community in the Rashid district.

Led by Lt. Col. Tim Watson, Jr., and Command Sgt. Maj. Brendan McIntyre, the 2nd "Warriors" Bn. of the 4th Inf. Regt., commanded four infantry companies, a forward support company, and headquarters company, taking control of approximately 750 Soldiers and more than 170 armored vehicles to secure 23 muhallahs, or neighborhoods, that were once marred by intense sectarian violence and insurgent activity.

Through a series of offensive operations under the 1st Inf. Div.'s 4th "Dragon" Brigade, the 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., a light infantry battalion with a prestigious history fighting in America's wars that dates back to the War of 1812, handily defeated Al Qaeda in Iraq terrorists, Special Groups Criminals and other anti-coalition forces where they lived and operated in Doura, said Watson.



U.S. Army photo courtesy of 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

**Spec. Josh Lukkasson, a light-wheeled mechanic assigned to Forward Support Company E, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, shows an Iraqi Army soldier how to repair a Humvee Feb. 2, 2008 at a joint security station in the Doura community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. A native of Covington, Wash., Lukkasson and the mechanics of the "Warriors" Bn., maintain the light infantry unit's vehicles and worked to train, mentor and coach Iraqi Security Forces, while deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.**

"Doura was in a precarious position for both security and services after very heavy fighting throughout 2007," Watson said. "The Warriors needed to maintain the hard won security while demonstrating progress in other lines of operations."

The companies maintained a 24-hour presence, operating from combat outposts and joint security stations in the markets and neighborhoods to assist local Iraqi Security Forces providing security for the people of Doura.

During the next 13 months, the 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., served to protect the people of Doura, developing the 7th "Lightning" Bde., 2nd National Police Div., into a legitimate and professional force, while simultaneously working to improve both the local governance and services for the people of the Rashid district, he

explained.

"When we first arrived to Doura, you could sense the tense security conditions," Watson said. "People were still not sure that security would last."

With more than a year of lasting security in the community, which is home to the Rashid District Council, the Iraqi citizens are rebuilding their homes and businesses in Doura and the greater Rashid district, he said.

"The Soldiers, sergeants and lieutenants on patrol every day made a huge impact by treating the people of Doura with dignity and respect," said Watson, a native of Atkinson, N.H. "The Warriors won the trust of the population and that has enabled us to make great progress through the cooperation of local Iraqis."

"Our overall mission was to

create a more stable and secure situation in Doura," said McIntyre, a native of Amarillo, Texas. "It was our intent to do so by ensuring security to the people, as well as increasing the proficiency of the local security forces and governance representatives."

McIntyre said the Soldiers of 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., demonstrated discipline and resolve while soldiering in the face of a long, intense deployment; and, he added, the battalion owes much of its success to developing a partnership with the Iraqi National Police.

"The Warrior Bn. had to adapt to accomplish many portions of our mission here in Baghdad," McIntyre said. "We had to provide security in the traditional sense, but we also

had to assist in the training of the Iraqi Security Forces and devise solutions to complex civil development problems."

Inheriting the once volatile area of operations, McIntyre said the threat posed by Special Groups Criminals and extremists attacking American forces, ISF and Iraqi citizens remained in what was once a stronghold for the insurgency in Baghdad.

The Warrior Soldiers focused their efforts on the 7th Bde., 2nd NP Div., partnering with the ISF to perform thousands of combined security patrols 24 hours-per-day, coaching, training and mentoring the National Policemen to maintain a constant presence in the communities and transition into the lead for security operations in Doura.

"Our battalion has applied



**Iraqi Policemen practice short range marksmanship during an 18-day advanced tactical training course at a joint security station in the Doura community of southern Baghdad Aug. 12. Soldiers from Company D, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad assisted the Iraqi Security Forces with the Special Warfare and Tactics training. Eighteen policemen from a force of 400 IPs graduated from the course.**



U.S. Army photo courtesy of 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt.

such thorough pressure,

and such unrelenting dedication to the mission, that the vast majority of enemy combatants have been expelled from Doura and instances of attacks have been greatly reduced," he said.

Reconciliation between the Sons of Iraq and the 7th Bde., 2nd NP Div., also contributed greatly to the improvement of security operations in the area, said Maj. Jose Polanco, executive officer of the 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

With the added security, the Warriors contributed to the improvement and growth of economic and essential services for the citizens of Doura, said Polanco, who hails from New York City.

Approving more than 800 microgrants, one-time grants for small business owners and vendors, the Warriors paid out nearly \$500,000 to help rebuild Iraq's local economy and stimulate growth in the neighborhoods and communities, he said.

The efforts to rebuild the Doura Market Complex, the main center of commerce for southern Baghdad, using grants and a modernization project, increased the number of shops and vendors from 319 to more than 1,100 businesses, said Polanco.

"The effective use of targeted microgrants by the Warrior Battalion made it the first unit in all of Baghdad to serve as the conduit through which a leveraged grant pilot program was conducted," Polanco



**Iraqi National Police from the 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division practice entering and clearing procedures during close quarters combat training July 14 at an NP station in the Doura community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. The Soldiers of the 2nd "Warriors" Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division — Baghdad, operate from several combat outposts and joint security stations throughout the Rashid district to better assist the ISF in their mission to secure Baghdad. The "Warriors" are part of the 4th BCT, 10th Mountain Division, stationed at Fort Polk, La., deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon in November of 2007 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.**



# 'Warriors' say farewell to Rashid

*Soldiers give 100 percent for mission*



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT

An Iraqi Army soldier assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 9th Battalion, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, mans a checkpoint, April 5, 2008, outside a Combat Outpost in Doura. Iraqi Army, Police and the Sons of Iraq, a volunteer-based Neighborhood Watch Program, maintain a 24-hour presence in the community located in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

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



**Lt. Col. Timothy Watson, who hails from Atkinson, N.H., and commander of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, presents a Meritorious Service Medal to Staff Sgt. John Barnes, a signal support systems specialist from Leesville, La., assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd “Warrior” Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., Dec. 13, during a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad’s Rashid district. Barnes also received a Combat Action Badge during the ceremony.**

**Lt. Col. Tim Watson, commander of the “Warriors” Regiment hands the battalion colors to Command Sgt. Maj. Brendan McIntyre, 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., attached to the 1st “Raider” Brigade, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, during a Change of Responsibility Ceremony, May 1, on FOB Falcon. McIntyre, who hails from Amarillo, Texas, replaced Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph Montour.**



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B



said. “The previous effective use of microgrants made Doura the most logical place to make the transition of microgrants to microloans.”

The battalion’s mission also encompassed a micro-generation program for local citizens increasing the number of hours for electricity in the area to as much as eight to 12 hours-a-day, he said.

The battalion was also directly responsible for the renovation of more than 40 schools in the 23 muhallahs and the opening of the Rashid Bank in the Doura Market Complex, added Polanco.

As INP and Sol built upon the ongoing security in Doura’s northern communities, the residents established a dependable Neighborhood and District Council for the Jaza’ir, Jazeera and Masafee districts, as their elected officials took ownership for their communities

and worked to improve the lives of their constituents, he said.

“One year ago, Doura was still burdened with the stigma of violence and danger,” said McIntyre. “That perception has since dissipated thanks largely to the commitment and competence of those leaders.”

“With the added security, North Doura also saw the return of displaced families that had fled Baghdad’s violence,” Polanco said. “More than 1,350 families have resettled in Doura, since the battalion’s transfer of authority.”

Watson said that the battalion’s single greatest achievement is evident in the accomplishments of Doura’s Lightning Brigade, as it takes authority for Doura.

“Throughout the 14-month

deployment, the Soldiers of the Warriors Battalion have displayed the utmost professionalism, courage and resolve in protecting the people of Doura,” Watson said. “Their commitment to the citizens of Doura is a testament of their dedication to standing for all that is noble and just in the ideals of our Nation; and they have communicated this commitment through their kindness, willingness to listen, and protection of those that cannot defend themselves.”

Spending countless hours working alongside the National Police, the NP Training Teams taught the ISF “what right looks like,” said Watson.

While working side-by-side with the Warriors, the NP forces developed confident

junior Iraqi officers and NCOs, who mirrored Coalition Forces operations, he said.

“The Warrior Bn. has performed admirably through the ever-present and ‘hands-on’ leadership of its officer and noncommissioned officers,” McIntyre said. “The Soldiers of this battalion gave every mission 100 percent of their effort and embodied the unit’s motto, ‘Don’t Tread on Me,’ in protecting the citizens of Doura in Baghdad.”

The 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt. will begin to redeploy in late December, returning to Fort Polk, La. by early next year. The 1st Bn., “Panthers” of the 505th Parachute Inf. Regt., 82nd Airborne Div., stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., and deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon, in southern Baghdad, will replace the Warriors for a 12-month tour in support of OIF.



**T**he Civil Affairs Teams of Company D, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, are working to break new ground in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

The civil affairs mission for the U.S. Army Reserve unit, deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon in support of the “Raider” Brigade, is to conduct civil military operations, said Maj. Mike Brockway, commander, Co. D, 404th CA Bn.

“It’s a catch-all for just about everything we are doing these days here in Baghdad and Iraq to legitimize the local government, increase their ability to provide essential services, and govern themselves within a self-reliant economy to set the conditions for a transition of the responsibility of Iraq to the people of Iraq,” said Brockway, a U.S. Army Reserve civil affairs officer from Monroe, N.Y.

One of the main efforts of the 1st BCT CA Teams is to work with the local governance to take care of the needs of their citizens, said Brockway, who annotated significant progress in Baghdad compared to previous years.

The CA teams still advise commanders in prioritizing needed projects based on operating budgets, said Brockway; however, he said the responsibility is placed squarely upon the neighborhood and district leadership.

In comparison to his deployment to Baghdad in 2004, today’s beladiyat, or local district leadership, accomplish projects and make progress on their own initiative without necessarily the support of the Coalition Forces, he said.

As a result, Brockway said that he sees the civil military operations shifting toward public information in efforts to educate Iraqis.

“The battalions and the brigade and the Infrastructure Coordination Element Team are spending all sorts of money to hit key problems, such as electrical, water and sewer,” he said, “but once

Capt. Neville McKenzie, civil affairs team leader, Company D, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, reimburses the headmaster at the Al Akmar Kindergarten School, Oct. 27, who purchased school supplies and playground equipment for the Mechanics community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. McKenzie, a native of Wappinger Falls, N.Y., serves with the civil affairs company stationed out of Fort Dix, N.J., and deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon in support of MND-B and Operation Iraqi Freedom.



U.S. Army photos by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

it percolates down to the individual citizen, they still have problems.”

Instead of working through their local leaders, often Iraqis who find the neighborhoods or communities without power or water when the systems break down, will attempt to circumvent the problem, tapping into other water lines or bootlegging electrical power, which taxes the networks and causes the systems to fail further up the line, he explained.

“Where once they had Saddam, who might have provided for them, now the onus is upon the Iraqis to employ civic responsibility to take care of what has been provided to them,” Brockway said.

As a company commander, Brockway said that he sees the importance of educating community leadership in the Rashid district’s neighborhood

and district councils to work with their constituents to make a change to the lifestyle and its mindset.

“At this stage of the game, the Iraqis have to take care of themselves, whether it’s the government, the military or the police they have to stand on their own,” he said.

The process will take just as much time as oversight, added Brockway, who works as a systems engineer for a major communication’s company when not on duty.

As the security situation continues to improve throughout Baghdad, Iraqi Security Forces are increasingly taking the lead in military and security operations, to include civil military operations, said Brockway.

The Iraqi National Police in the Rashid district have developed a relationship with the local populace to the point where the local citizens trust their security forces enough to help keep criminals and their weapons off the streets, he said.

“The biggest change (to operations) is in what our particular skill sets are looking at in terms of security, looking at what other CA



U.S. Army photos by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

First Sgt. Patrick Gongora, first sergeant for Company D, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, poses with Iraqi children Oct. 1 during a local neighborhood event in the Doura community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. The U.S. Army Reserve Civil Affairs Team, stationed out of Fort Dix, N.J., deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon, to conduct civil military operations in support of the 1st “Raider” Brigade.



# 1ST BCT CIVIL AFFAIRS BUILDS CIVIC CAPACITY IN RASHID DISTRICT

companies are out there doing: training ISF, taking local NPs and training them to do our jobs, and the National Police here actually understand the value of it," Brockway explained.

"We are training shurtas (policemen), training officers and enlisted how to conduct CMO and why it is important," he said. "Every shurta needs to understand that the problems of the people are the problem of his people."

Attached to the 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., the company has more recently focused its efforts into training Iraqi NPs and ISF on civil military operations, working with leaders to identify civil affairs representatives, shurta who take on the added responsibility as an additional duty, said Sgt. 1st Class Norberto Flores, civil military operations center noncommissioned officer-in-charge of tracking the five CA teams that support the "Raider" Brigade.

"First we showed them basic civil affairs doctrine, and then we have taken them out and did projects, such as cooperative medical exercises, and basically having them hand out school supplies and doing basic assessments as far as infrastructure is concerned," said Flores, a U.S. Army Reservist from Albany, N.Y.

The CA teams show the Iraqi law enforcement agencies how to coordinate with existing agencies, governmental and nongovernmental agencies to get problems solved at their level of operations, he said.

The intent is to build the ISF civil affairs capacity to cement the IPs and NPs role as authority figures in the local communities and neighborhoods, explained Flores.

"If the community trusts their security forces, then I think that goes a lot further than handing out a (school bag)," Flores said.

The role of the CA Team has not changed much during the past five years, said Flores.

What changed from previous operations is the level of involvement from the brigade combat team and

its organic units, he said.

In recent years, the brigade combat team and its maneuver units increased their involvement in the CMO process taking more responsibility at the lower levels, said Flores.

"At this stage, I think the maneuver battalions understand civil affairs so much better now that they are out there doing CMO every day on their mission, which, in turn, makes our job a lot easier," he said. "The Army's just doing a better job with CMO."

From the perspective of the civil affairs teams, the platoon leaders and Soldiers are increasingly engaged in non-kinetic operations and have dedicated their efforts to building a rapport within the neighborhoods

and communities; while in the past, CMO was strictly a command priority, said Flores.

As security improved through the years, so has the willingness of local governance to represent their citizens and provide constituent services for their neighborhoods and communities, said Maj. Felix Acosta, civil affairs officer, assigned to the 404th CA team working with the 1st BCT's Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Felix and his team of civil affairs Soldiers are partnered with the 1st BCT EPRT to improve civic capacity for the approximately 1.6 million people of the Rashid district. The CA Soldiers are force multipliers for the EPRT concept, said Acosta,

who added that the company brings a wide array of skills and experience to the brigade.

"We are Soldiers," he said. "We are warriors first; however, we have a skill set that is more in mind with civil society and its related issues."

Civic capacity is the ability of a society of people to organize itself in a civil structure that is representative of the communities and neighborhoods, said the U.S. Army Reservist from Philadelphia. Keeping the public informed and making the people aware of the function of the local governance is the key to the success of the ISF's and CF's efforts to build upon civic capacity, explained Acosta,

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U.S. Army photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

A local Iraqi community volunteer hands out school bags to Iraqi children at the Ibn al Maajid Primary School, Oct. 30, in the Risalah community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. Iraqi Security Forces worked with local leaders from the Risalah Neighborhood Advisory Council to provide for the needs of more than 60 schools in the community of approximately 250,000 Iraqis and 12 muhallahs. Soldiers of Company D, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, assists ISF and local leaders to coordinate community events, such as cooperative medical engagements and school supply distributions.



# RAIDER BRIGADE CIVIL AFFAIRS PLANNERS MANAGE RASHID'S RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Civil Affairs Leaders for the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, have a vision for the future of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. This is a future that facilitates projects of agriculture, commerce and industry, made possible by continuing security and stability in the region.

The “Raider” Brigade’s CA mission employs a wide range of technical experts to accomplish such missions, using CA Teams from the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion; the 1st Special Troops Battalion’s Infrastructure Coordination Element Team; and the 1st BCT embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team to carry out the multi-faceted projects designed to meet basic needs for the people of Rashid, said Maj. Timothy Reed, civil affairs officer for the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

“Right now our mission is to help alleviate areas of needs like power generation, providing generators, or water, helping provide further assistance with clean water projects, and increasing capacities in the local community, sometimes using Government of Iraq funds, but mainly the Commander’s Emergency Response Program funds,” he explained.

Current projects throughout the Rashid district, such as the renovation of Tariq al-Hillah, the major highway leading into Baghdad; micro-generation projects providing power to local neighborhoods; and small one-time-grants to stimulate local business and economy, remain the brigade’s biggest success stories, added Reed, who graduated from New Mexico State University with double majors in city planning and geography.

One future project involves the Raider Brigade CA and ePRT working with local leaders and community farmers



U.S. Army photos by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

**Maj. Timothy Reed, civil affairs officer from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, meets with local Iraqi contractors, Jul. 18, at the site of the Jihad Civil Services Department building in southern Baghdad’s Rashid district. Reed, a native of Las Cruces, N.M., oversees battalion and brigade civil affairs operations with the assistance of CA Teams from the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, the 1st BCT embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team, and the 1st Special Troops Bn.’s Infrastructure Coordination Element Team.**

to make assessments and assist the local government to acquire greenhouses, tractors and drip irrigation kits needed to restore southern Baghdad’s agricultural community and farms, said Reed.

Since beginning its operations in the Rashid district in April, the 1st BCT Civil Affairs facilitated a myriad of projects targeting areas of needs ranging from economics to essential services, said Reed.

The progress began when Coalition Forces, working alongside the Iraqi Security Forces, began to pull the weapons out of the communities, providing more security for the people, said Reed, a native of Las Cruces, N.M.

As security improved, the brigade increased its efforts to stimulate the local economy and assist with basic needs

and services for communities once abandoned to terrorism and violence, said Reed, a former field artillery officer with more than 13 years of service with a deployment to Bosnia and two tours as a civil affairs officer in Africa.

Improved security allowed for U.S. Soldiers to provide civil military services and projects for the citizens, allowing the government ministries to begin rebuilding, facilitating the return of the Rashid citizens, he explained.

“We have been able to ensure these projects get done, helping to plan out focus areas and serve as direct advisors to the commander for planning civil activity and what the brigade can do to help the populace,” he said.

The local communities have

a better understanding of what services Coalition Forces can provide and accepted help once they could see the progress in other areas of Rashid; more important, the community leaders are beginning to take ownership, he added.

Given the current level of security in Rashid and throughout Baghdad, Soldiers must assume that they are doing all the right things as they work alongside the Iraqi Security Forces, who are increasingly taking the lead to accomplish the mission, said Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Chisler, civil affairs noncommissioned officer of the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

A veteran of 13 years, on his second deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Chisler said he tracks the various projects as they move





U.S. Army photos by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

from the battalion commanders through the brigade and onto the various nongovernmental agencies and resources for funding.

"I walk it through the chain so that it gets funded as quickly as possible," he explained.

The CA Teams assigned to the Raider Brigade's maneuver battalions are enablers, conducting assessments, identifying problems, making recommendations to commanders on the ground and completing scopes of work, he said.

As operations transitioned from a high-intensity conflict to a low-intensity counterinsurgency fight, Chisler credited the U.S. Army for using its CA and ePRT assets to employ a "grass roots approach" in winning the support of the local community.

"Employment and power, grass roots type of stuff at the tactical level, that's what we do, boots on the ground fixing problems, writing scopes of work, putting in the generation, getting the schools fixed," said Chisler, who hails from Lexington, N.C.

Once responsible for projects ranging from a couple thousand dollars, Chisler said that he now accounts for a spending plan that encompasses millions, coordinating with battalion commanders to fund their plans in accordance with the brigade's priorities.

"As this theater matured it got bigger and bigger; and now that we took care of the little stuff, we have to work on the larger projects, such as the electrical grid and the sewage systems," he explained. "It requires more planning, but still needs tactical CA guys to look at the projects, talk to the people and help with the scopes of work."

The ICE Team is a brigade asset for construction pertaining to infrastructure projects, addressing essential services, such as paving roads, repairing electrical transformers and replacing sewage pumps, said Chisler.

The 1st BCT ePRT works with the different parts of the neighborhood, district and city government, such as the director generals of the Amanat, the Ministry for Baghdad's municipal services, or its administrative branches, the Beladiya, he explained.

"They do the political administration, and we do the 'boots on the ground'-type of stuff," he said.

"Here at the brigade-level, we can affect what happens in Rashid," Chisler added. "We may not be able to change that stuff at echelons above our reality, but we can put the band-aid on it until we can get our chain of command or their (local leadership) to get with the Government of Iraq and Beladiya to make it a priority."

As the nature of operations and priorities change, security still remains the foundation that allows the CA assets to do their job, he said, and the continuing security efforts in Rashid directly contributed to market revitalization in the Doura, Saydiyah and Abu T'shir marketplaces.

Areas that were once abandoned are now packed with merchants and consumers, which has allowed the ePRT to expand its efforts to the local banks, in return, building a stronger economy and enabling the CA Teams to do a better job in addressing areas of need, he explained.

"That's critical for the economic (recovery) in Rashid,"

Sheik Ayaad al-Jabouri, the Radwaniyah Support Council Chairman, and Col. Ted Martin, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, mark the opening of the Jumare Bridge Sept. 26 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. Since beginning its operations in the Rashid district in April, the 1st BCT Civil Affairs facilitated a myriad of projects targeting areas of needs ranging from economics to essential services. One future project involves Raider Brigade CA and ePRT working with local leaders and community farmers to make assessments and assist the local government to acquire greenhouses, tractors and drip irrigation kits needed to restore southern Baghdad's agricultural community and farms.

Chisler said. "The Doura Market is exploding, and the Saydiyah market is going crazy, and it is attributed by all the work of the infantry Soldiers and all the work that the guys on the ground have done with the security piece, because without that none of this economic growth could have happened."

Commanders should take the time to ensure that their Soldiers understand how important their actions are to the accomplishment of every aspect of the brigade's mission, said Chisler.

Soldiers on the ground providing security enables the 1st BCT CA Teams and ePRT to accomplish their mission, he said.

"It all makes a difference — every bit of it," he said.

"Everything we do on the battlefield has an effect somewhere down the road and that's the key to us getting out of here and going home with our chins up, knowing we did our job."

The end state should be a gradual pull-out, said Chisler, as local and district leaders take charge of their communities and Iraq's governmental ministries begin to rebuild the infrastructure.

## ***Raider Civil Affairs works to keep community informed***

— from *Civil Affairs* pg. 9

who has more than 15 years service as a Pennsylvania State Trooper.

"We are operating on the ground level with the neighborhood and district councils, but ask the guy on the street what is going on, he is not going to concern himself with the national level strategies," Acosta explained. "The people are more interested in someone who is going to work for their problems, their neighborhoods, work for them."

The communities must understand that as the Government of Iraq is working to restore essential services and improve living conditions for the people of Baghdad "that there is not a lack of planning just a lack of communication," he said. "The people out there are out there doing their job, but unless that plan is shared with the people, they think that no one is trying to work on their behalf — or there is no plan."

The team is currently working on the creation of an operating radio station at the Rashid District Council Hall in Doura, where the district leadership will be able to get their messages to the people, said Acosta.

"This will allow the local leadership to develop project prioritization and communicate essential services issues and civic events, community news and an emergency broadcasting system," explained Acosta. "It is another way for transparency to be shown in government."

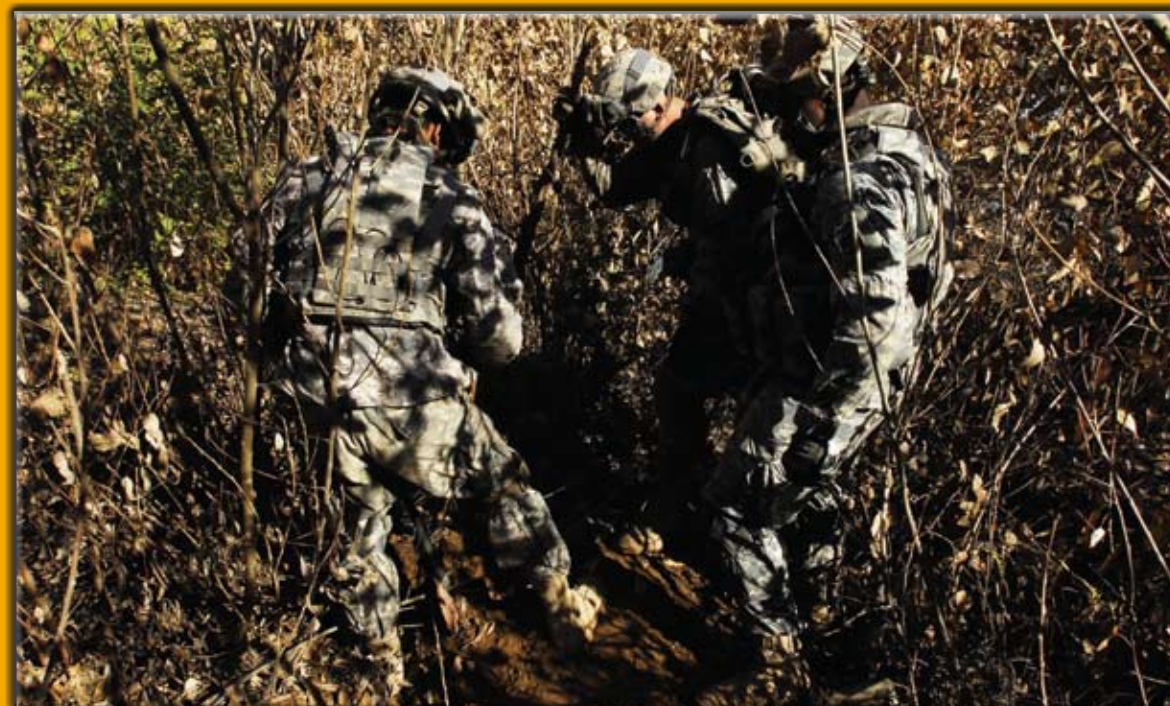
Stationed out of Fort Dix, N.J., the 404th CA Bn. is part of the 353rd Civil Affairs Command, United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command, currently deployed in support of MND-B and Operation Iraqi Freedom.





Soldiers from 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, wait for soldiers from the Iraqi Army to arrive at their headquarters to begin search operations in the Jihad community of southern Baghdad.

U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

1st Lt. Jessie Sheehan, an infantry platoon leader from Knoxville, Tenn. (left), Pfc. Joshua MacQuarrie, an infantry paratrooper from Copperas Cove, Texas, and Staff Sgt. Omar Jackson, an infantry squad leader from Newark, N.J., dig at the possibility of caches buried in a brush of thickets along the banks of the Tigris River Dec. 26. The paratroopers, assigned to Company D, 1st "Panther" Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, part of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, out of Fort Bragg, N.C., are attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Infantry Division in support of Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Panthers are scheduled to replace the 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., which will complete its 14-month deployment to the Rashid district early next year.

Pfc. James Honeycutt, from Charlotte, N.C., (left) and Spc. John Tondour, from Vestal, N.Y., infantrymen assigned to Company D, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, search an abandoned dock along the Tigris River, searching for weapons caches Dec. 26 in southern Baghdad. The 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., will begin to re-deploy in late December, returning to Fort Polk, La., by early next year. The 1st "Panther" Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., and deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon, in southern Baghdad, will replace the Warriors for a 12-month tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Iraqi butchers wrestle a cow for butchering in the Abu T'shir community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. Dr. Muayad Hamad, a Baghdad philanthropist donated four cows to local Iraqi families in the Abu T'shir community, Dec. 10, for the Eid al Adha celebration. Leaders and Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division -- Baghdad, attended the Iraqi event to show their support for the community during the holiday event.

U.S. Army photo by Maj. Dave Olson, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B



# Ivy Division celebrates 91 years

Story and photos by Sgt. Jason Thompson, MND-B PAO

The 4th Infantry Division has a long and distinguished history that includes combat in four wars – which is proudly displayed by the 23 campaign streamers that adorn its organizational colors.

Nicknamed the Ivy Division, it is the fourth oldest division in the Army and was formed Dec. 10, 1917 at Camp Greene, N.C., under the command of Maj. Gen. George Cameron.

During its “Steadfast and Loyal” service to the United States of America and the U.S. Army, more than 550,000 Soldiers have proudly worn the distinctive Ivy patch on their left shoulder, creating a legacy of dedicated service to the nation that has spanned more than nine decades since its inception to fight in the “Great War” of World War I.

It is fitting that as an infantry division born of war, with a history forged by conflict, the 4th Inf. Div. celebrated its 91st birthday Dec. 10 while engaged in combat operations in Baghdad.

“I truly love this division,” said Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, a Hattiesburg, Miss., native, the commanding general of the 4th Inf. Div. and Multi-National Division – Baghdad. “This division is the only division in the Army which uses the word ‘Loyal’ within its motto. The Soldiers are indeed loyal – they are Steadfast and Loyal.”

“The Soldiers of the Ivy Division have done a magnificent job, both past and present,” he continued. “I am most honored to celebrate this division’s 91st birthday with each and every Soldier who shares the same patch on their left shoulder.”

The division first saw action during World War I, seeing combat in five major campaigns.

The 4th Inf. Div. again was called into action to serve during World War II, where it was most notably recognized as the first allied unit to assault the beaches of Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Soldiers of the division proudly served throughout Europe, seeing combat in five major European campaigns.

Two decades would pass before the division would again be called upon during time of war, when the 4th Inf. Div. arrived in South Vietnam in Sept. 1966. Here, its Soldiers would see combat in 10 separate campaigns over the next six years.

In March 2003, the 4th Inf. Div. again deployed into harms way. This time, more than 17,000 Soldiers left their Families behind and deployed to Iraq into an area known as the Sunni Triangle, seeing combat in the Global War on Terrorism. The 4th Inf. Div. spearheaded numerous combat operations, ultimately leading to the capture of Saddam Hussein.

Following redeployment in March 2004, the 4th Inf. Div. was one of the divisions that led the charge in transforming from a division-based Army to a brigade-based Army. The new design implemented by the division was a significant change from how the division fought in the past, and it encompassed the most



Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond (right), commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and Command Sgt. Maj. John Gioia, senior enlisted leader of 4th Inf. Div. and MND-B, add the Iraq campaign streamer to the division’s organizational colors during the 4th Inf. Div.’s 91st birthday ceremony Dec. 10. In recognition of service in Operation Iraqi Freedom, the campaign streamer with the colors of the Iraq campaign medal and inscribed “Iraq” is authorized to be flown from the 4th Inf. Div.’s organizational colors.

comprehensive restructuring in the Army since World War II. Of even greater significance is that this was accomplished while the Army was still engaged with the enemy and fighting a war.

The division was then called back into combat in 2005, and again in 2007, to spearhead combat operations in and around Baghdad as the driving force behind Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

In addition to the wartime and counter-insurgency missions during all three deployments to Iraq, the Division was instrumental in opening and supplying thousands of schools, hospitals and clinics within its area of operation. Division personnel also repaired bridges, roads, power plants, oil pipelines, water mains and many other essential parts of the Iraqi infrastructure.

“This division has had some tough fights, collectively, since its existence,” said Command Sgt. Maj. John Gioia, senior enlisted leader, 4th Inf. Div. “We have suffered more than

50,000 casualties, and more than 10,000 Soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice defending America’s freedom.

“Here, today, it’s very clear in everybody’s mind what is at stake here as we finish this mission in Iraq.”

The 4th Inf. Div. staff celebrated 91 years of rich history within the division during a ceremony in front of the MND-B headquarters building in Camp Liberty. However, this was by no means the first time the division celebrated a birthday during combat operations. Through six tours of duty throughout the globe, the Ivy Division has been deployed during 10 of its birthdays.

“This is a historical event,” said Gioia. “The division was formed in 1917 for the sole purpose of going to war, where it fought the ‘Great War.’ Ironically enough, here we are again, 91 years later, in combat, in Baghdad, defending our freedom.”

“I’m humbled to be in the formation with these great Soldiers and what they do every day, and the sacrifices and the hardships that they take, and the Families who are also making sacrifices back home. If you’re going to celebrate a birthday, and you can’t be with your immediate Family, then you celebrate with your extended Family. In this case, it is the great warriors of the 4th Inf. Div.”

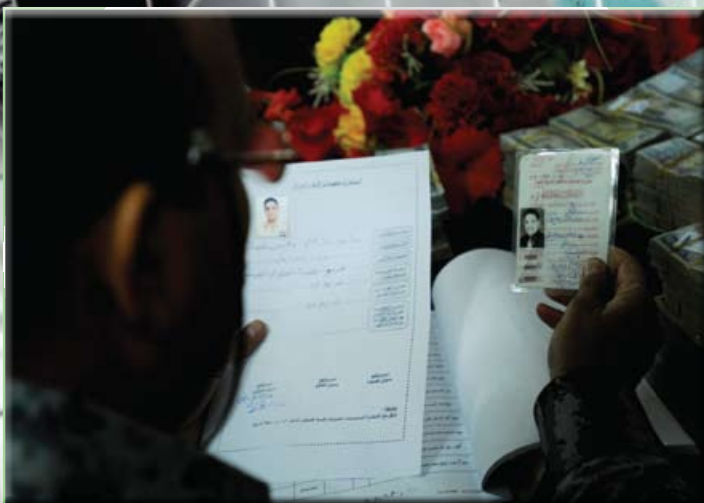
The 4th Inf. Div. is organized with five brigade-sized elements – four maneuver brigades and a multifunctional aviation brigade. The division is split-based, with the division’s headquarters, 1st Brigade Combat Team and Combat Aviation Brigade, stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, and the 2nd, 3rd and 4th BCTs, stationed in Fort Carson, Colo. Upon redeployment from Iraq, the division’s headquarters and 1st BCT will relocate to Fort Carson and the CAB will be reassigned outside of the 4th Inf. Div.





**M**embers of the Abna al-Iraq visited the 3rd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division Headquarters to receive their monthly stipend Dec. 16 during payday activities in the Masafee community of southern Baghdad's Rashid district. Soldiers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, provided over watch and settled issues between the Sons of Iraq and the NP during the payday.

U.S. Army photos by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B





# 1st BCT's exceptional NCOs, Soldiers compete for top honors

**Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams**  
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

The 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, called for its best Soldiers and junior sergeants to showcase their tactical and technical proficiency in a test to be called the "Raider" Brigade's 2008 Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year Dec. 14-15 at Forward Operating Base Falcon.

Following a military board, Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Bobb, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., announced Spc. Ian Vertefeuille and Staff Sgt. Travis Coley as the 1st BCT 2008 Soldier and NCO of the Year.

Coley, an infantry squad leader, and Vertefeuille, a lab technician at the Cobra Medical Clinic on FOB Falcon, excelled during the two-day competition against their peers, outscoring six other candidates during several events designed to test

their combat proficiency and general military knowledge, said Bobb.

The 1st BCT's command sergeants major and senior leaders reached across combat outposts and joint security stations in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad to convene the contest for more than 3,800 Soldiers and NCOs of the 1st BCT, culminating with one final board to test the overall military bearing and knowledge for the competitors, said Sgt. Maj. Ronald Smiley, operations sergeant major, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Based on the "Total Soldier Concept," the two-day event began with pre-combat checks and inspections before a trip to the Engagement Skills Trainer, where Soldiers put their muscle memory to the test during a reflexive fire simulation, said Smiley, who organized the contest.

The hands-on portion of the competition involved a series of tactical combat-related tasks that included first aid, weapons proficiency and marksmanship; culminated with a mystery event - a written examination to test the Soldier's general military knowledge.

The winners of the competition earned the right to represent the Raider Brigade at the 2008 4th Inf. Div.'s Soldier and NCO of the Year competition to be held Dec. 14 at Camp Liberty, said Smiley, who hails from Lake Village, Ark.

Coley, assigned to Company B, 1st "Regulars" Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., said he credits his success to his NCOs and senior leaders in his unit, who coached and mentored him in preparation for the competition.

"I think this will be great for (1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt.); it's a great unit with an amazing sergeant major," Coley said. "The whole time I have been here he has been challenging me as an NCO providing me with NCO Professional Development."

Coley told the members of the board that he should be selected to become the Raider Brigade's NCO of the Year because immediately following the competition, he was returning to his Soldiers and his combat mission.

"I'm doing it for all those guys who are on patrol constantly that are 'boots on the ground' that don't have a lot of time but have a lot of heart," said Coley, who hails from Hickory, N.C.

The Soldiers and NCOs won their battalion's monthly, quarterly and annual competition to earn a chance to compete at the brigade level, which can be a challenge for combat Soldiers who must focus on the mission in a combat zone or are engaged in guard duty at their patrol bases, said Coley.

"It means a great deal to me to win this, especially for all the other 'Regulars' that are back on COPs and JSSs throughout Baghdad," he said.

The biggest part to preparing for competition is building self-confidence and not quitting, said Vertefeuille, Raider Brigade's 2008 Soldier of the Year.

"This is a great opportunity,"



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO

Master Sgt. Ronald Sumler, an infantryman from Memphis Tenn., assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, performs pre-combat checks and inspections on Sgt. Matthew Gordon, a human intelligence collector, from Grand Rapids, Mich., assigned to Company A, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, to begin the 1st "Raider" Brigade's 2008 Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier of the Year Competition Dec. 14 at Forward Operating Base Falcon.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO

Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, compete at the Engagement Skills Trainer on Forward Operating Base Falcon Dec. 14 during the 2008 1st "Raider" Brigade's Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year Competition.



said Vertefeuille, a native of Spokane, Wash., assigned to Co. C, 4th "Packhorse" Support Battalion, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., "and I think everybody should be given the chance to be recognized and stand out amongst their peers."

Vertefeuille also thanked his chain of command, which he said provided him with the inspiration to compete and the desire to be the best Soldier in the brigade.

Competing in military contests is good professional development for Soldiers looking to become leaders, said Vertefeuille, who added he will impart the gained experience onto his Soldiers.

"It is constant guidance, mentorship and being there with the Soldiers; we keep them informed on everything," said 1st Sgt. Rakimm Broadnax-Rogers, a native of Montgomery, Ala., the senior enlisted leader of the Cobra Troop Medical Clinic, Co. C, 4th Supt. Bn. "For the purpose of the board, all the basic knowledge and everything else, we involve the Soldiers in our NCOPD program ... there is no discriminating factor whether Soldiers are practicing in a board or not. We test their daily knowledge on a daily basis, and that is

what it is all about."

The Soldiers who stepped up to the challenge during the competition were: Spc. Jamal Tmatk, a combat engineer from Koror, Palau, assigned to Co. E, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt.; Spc. Lukas Rybak, a cavalry scout from Brooklyn, N.Y., assigned to Troop C, and Sgt. Christopher Watkins, a cavalry scout from Bosnall, Calif., assigned to Troop B, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regt.; Sgt. Windy Klein, a combat medic from Westmoreland, Kan., and Spc. Ian Vertefeuille, an X-Ray lab technician from Spokane, Wash., assigned to Co. C, 4th Support Bn.; and Spc. Michael Perez, a human intelligence analyst from Austin, Texas, and Sgt. Matthew Gordon, a human intelligence collector from Grand Rapids, Mich.; assigned to Co. A, 1st Special Troops Bn.

The winners of the competition were presented a U.S. Army Commendation Medal and various Raider Brigade paraphernalia, to include a utility tool and thermal blanket and a portable video game. Each participating Soldier was also presented a Certificate of Achievement and a Raider Brigade Coin.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO  
Staff Sgt. Travis Coley, an infantry squad leader, assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division — Baghdad, clears an M2 .50-caliber Browning machine gun during the "hands-on" testing for the 1st "Raider" Brigade's 2008 Noncommissioned Officer and Soldiers of the Year Competition, Dec. 14, in southern Baghdad's Rashid district.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO

Spc. Jamal Tmatk, a combat engineer assigned to Company E, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, performs a casualty evaluation during the 1st "Raider" Brigade's 2008 Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier of the Year Competition held Dec. 14 in southern Baghdad's Rashid district. Tmatk, who hails from Koror, Palau, is part of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division — Baghdad.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO



# Police Transition Team joins RAIDER BCT Law Enforcement Professionals to train ISF

Stories and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Iraqi Police from the Rashid district's Criminal Investigation Division and National Police patrolmen attended a joint Tactical Site Exploitation class led by Law Enforcement Professionals and U.S. Air Force Airmen, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, to learn crime scene investigation standard operating procedures Dec. 22-23.

U.S. Air Force Security Patrolmen from Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, assigned to the 716th Military Police Battalion, 8th MP Bde., MND-B, partnered with the 1st BCT's LEP for the two-day training event at a joint security station in the Doura community of southern Baghdad's Rashid district.

"Our mission is to see that the Iraqi Police get as much training as we can offer them," said U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Kane Shope, security patrolman, and Police Transition Team trainer assigned to the 732nd ESF Sqdn., working in the Rashid district with the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

"This training is about investigating crime, whether it be investigating a murder scene, or to just get (intelligence on a tip) to check out a specific person," said Shope, who has more than five years experience working as a patrolman.

The squad of Airmen has a unique mission partnered with the Iraqi Ministry of Interior's CID 6, a major crimes unit responsible for investigating specialized crimes in the Rashid district, said Shope, who hails from Galeton, Penn.

Many of the CID detectives have more than a

decade's experience serving as Iraqi Policemen, added Shope.

"We are just trying to give them the basic fundamentals of searching, and while they are searching, what type of

evidence they are looking for and how to do it in an organized manner so that everyone is on the same page."

The instructors work hand-in-hand with the IP training academies, who also provide a detailed block of instruction complete with hands-on exercises, said Shope, but the intent is to teach the junior police officers, who are working while awaiting their chance to attend the academy.

"If they go to the academy before they receive this class, it is usually a good refresher, and we might hit points from a different angle, give them something different to look at," he explained. "Although it is very simple for us teaching these classes, and it seems like very basic information, it's going to be used as a stepping stone for them to get into the law enforcement/police mindset."

As Baghdad's forensics laboratories are standing up again, the training is very important to enforcing Baghdad's Fard al-Qanoon, or Rule of Law, since it is vital that Iraqi Security Forces get the right evidence to the labs uncontaminated, said Shope.

"The biggest challenge is we look at the law enforcement in the U.S., and as long as we can remember it has always been structured," he said, "and although Iraq has always had IP in the past, and although it may have been structured, it was probably directed in a manner different from law enforcement."

Iraq's judges placed a minimum standard on any case brought to court, which must include sworn statements made by two witnesses, photographs of evidence, and a picture of the suspect with the seized contraband, everything from weapons and guns to counterfeit iden-



**An Iraqi National Policeman from the 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, bags a pistol at a mock crime scene investigation, part of a training exercise designed to teach Iraqi Police officers and Iraqi National Policemen the tactics, techniques and procedures for Tactical Site Exploitation Dec. 22-23. U.S. Air Force Airmen and Law Enforcement Professionals attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, led the two-day training event at a joint security station in the Doura community, to teach Iraqi Security Forces the proper methods for identifying, collecting and labeling evidence during criminal investigations, supporting Iraqi forensics to build legal cases against suspected criminals.**





**Law Enforcement Professional Michael Sovey, a retired New Jersey State Trooper, from Tuckerton, N.J., attached to the 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, introduces Tactical Site Exploitation and Sensitive Site Exploitation to a class of Iraqi Police officers and National Policemen Dec. 22 at a joint security station in Rashid's Doura community.**

tification cards and personal photos, said Jack Barnett, law enforcement professional assigned to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

"Iraq's judges said they wanted this in court, so Multi-National Forces – Iraq said that the LEPs have to start training the ISF — part of Operation Iraqi Jurisdiction, based on requirements outlined by the Law and Order Task Force on TSE and evidence collection, adhering to the detailed evidence collection procedures as identified by the Joint Expeditionary Forensics Facility."

The current training is a continuation of previous classes taught by the 1st "Raider" BCT's LEP to train IP and NP on Tactical Site Exploitation and Sensitive Site Exploitation procedures, he said.

"We trained 174 Coalition Soldiers with the TSE and SSE training," Barnett, a retired law enforcement official with more than 46 years experience working for the police; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; and U.S. Department of State.

"We trained all our National Police Transition Teams here and the ones in Doura, then we brought in Detachment 3, trained them; and they are giving the same course of instruction to the Iraqi Police," he said.

The LEP attended the TSE training event at the joint security station to introduce the curriculum and oversee the PTT teaching the NP and IP, said Barnett, who hails from Pickwick Dam, Tenn.

The LEP also created test sites, planting fake evidence throughout notional crime scenes to evaluate the NP and IP as they search for evi-

dence, explained Barnett.

"The NP have to learn at the ground level to conduct basic TSE and SSE to prepare for the CID units that arrive on the site," Barnett said.

The training event is the first time the PTT has taught IP and NP together since the current team from Det. 3 of the 732nd ESF Sqdn. deployed to Baghdad in September 2008, said Tech. Sgt. Christopher Green, squad leader and PTT team chief for CID 6 and the Rashid District Headquarters.

"The NP have a pretty good grasp on the basic concept of crime scene in-

vestigation," said Green, who calls Wellsville, N.Y. home. "We are trying to set the standard for each of them, so that when they are doing their duties, they know the set standard for the NP and the IP is the same, and that hopefully in the future, we can start merging them and conducting joint-type operations."

By definition of a police officer, a crime scene investigation is a systematic search of a secure location for any evidence that can be used in the lawful prosecution of a crime, he explained.

If Coalition Forces run a warrant through the CID, a team of detectives might accompany the ISF and U.S. Forces serving the warrant to facilitate the transition from a raid site to a crime scene, explained Green.

"The CID is the major crime unit for the area, so when they are called up to a scene any mistake the NP make could jeopardize the entire case and some bad guy that we may have locked away ... this guy could walk," Green said.

The end state of the PTT's efforts is to get the Iraqi Police and National Police working together on the basic fundamentals of crime scene investigations, handling and labeling evidence, and expediting the Iraqi judicial process, he said.



**U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Daniel Taylor, from Scott Air Force Base, Ill. (right) and Senior Airman Gregory Carter from Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., both security forces patrolmen, assigned to Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, teach a class on collecting evidence during Tactical Site Exploitation and Sensitive Site Exploitation Training Dec. 22.**



## ***Army specialist travels across continents to provide for Family Ex-refugee reflects on hardships of life in Africa***

**Story by Sgt. David Hodge  
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B**

**A**t the age of 20, he has experienced more adventure and traveling across more countries, oceans and continents in search of a better life than most people his age.

"It was miserable because of the war," said Samuel Ladu, describing his life in Sudan between 1983 and 1994 amidst the Second Civil War. "We were living to survive. From day to day, if we woke up in the morning, we thanked God."

Ladu called a small farming community on the fringes of Juba, Sudan, his home for approximately 20 years before embarking on a remarkable journey across eastern Africa as a war refugee, who flew to the U.S. to become a citizen.

In Juba, Ladu and his Family were surrounded by two fighting factions.

"In the city, there were bombings every day," stated Ladu, who currently serves as a translator in southern Baghdad for the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Ladu's father died when he was six. Soon after, his older brother, Charles, developed glaucoma. Two unsuccessful surgeries by under-qualified doctors left Charles blind for life, said Ladu.

This left Ladu and his mother to care for Charles in a war-torn area with little food or money. His opportunity to leave Sudan came shortly after receiving a blessing from his mother to move away and search for a better life.

Ladu led Charles and his cousin to neighboring Ethiopia in search of treatments and an education. While in Ethiopia, he continued his high school education while living on rations of beans and corn provided by shelters and refugee camps. Surviving in Ethiopia became more difficult as time passed.

"While I was in Ethiopia, I considered going back to Sudan," he explained. "I couldn't go through with it though. In Ethiopia, I didn't talk to anyone, and I didn't have any food to eat, so life became so difficult."

At one point, he said he realized anything could happen to him and his Family while at the camp, so he took a chance and went to Kenya on the little amount of money the group could produce.

"When I went to Kenya, I assumed a refugee status at a camp on the Kenya and Somalia border," Ladu explained.

Disease and famine plagued the camp. Ladu said he believes he was lucky to have stayed only four months before his processing became complete and he boarded an aircraft to the United States.

"Some people stay for years in the

camps and even die there waiting to get out," he added.

Arriving in New York in 1994, Ladu immediately became eligible for work and other benefits, and moved across the country to San Diego.

He struggled to find steady work there, often spending up to 80 percent of his wages toward rent.

Working at a convenient store as a cashier, armed criminals robbed Ladu at gunpoint on three separate occasions. The local police caught the criminals each time. His employer offered him an additional four dollars an hour to remain with the store, but he decided against the raise.

"I decided I had better move on before I ended up getting hurt," Ladu said.

He moved to Rochester, Minn., in 1996, where he attended welding school and worked as a professional welder at a factory. He eventually flew his girlfriend and brother to the United States to live with him.

Since Ladu was a small child, he said he often envisioned becoming a Soldier to serve his country. In fact, he attempted to join the Army three separate occasions but was not proficient enough in the English language.

In March 2007, he received his chance when he enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserves and attended Advanced Individual Training at Fort Jackson, S.C., to become a translator.

"When I look at my life, I see that the U.S. has done a lot for me," stated Ladu. "They brought me from Africa and gave me many opportunities. I asked myself what I could do to pay the government back, so I decided to join the Army."

Upon completion of AIT, he immediately deployed to Iraq and arrived at Forward Operating Base Falcon in early August.

Shortly after his arrival, he bumped into Bol Madut, a linguist attached to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. The two immediately recognized each other from middle school in Sudan.

Madut said he heard that a person from Sudan was coming to work, and he was surprised to find out it was his childhood colleague.

"In Sudan, Ladu was a very religious man," explained Madut. "He carried a Bible around with

him all the time, trying to spread the word of Christianity. When I saw him in Iraq, I asked him where his Bible was."

Ladu currently translates for Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Bobb, the senior enlisted leader for the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

His duties include providing assessments on culture, politics and significant information released by the Iraq media before each patrol.

"Ladu is very informative, and he isn't from Iraq, so we know his assessment is impartial to the different religious groups," said Spc. Sam Krasnican, an infantryman from Bloomington, Ill., assigned to the personnel security detachment, HHD, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. "He is a major asset to the Army and the unit."

Krasnican, who serves as Ladu's first-line supervisor, said he believes Ladu is an outstanding individual, who will do well when given an opportunity to lead.

Following the deployment, Ladu plans to either teach at his AIT in Fort Jackson or work in a recruiter's office to encourage others like him to enlist.

He is the father of six children and he married his girlfriend before leaving for basic training. Charles, his brother, now holds a bachelor's degree in International Relations and another in Political Science.

"When I was younger, I would point out airplanes flying in the sky and tell my mother that someday she will be sitting next to me flying to the U.S.," Ladu stated.

He plans to someday fly his ill mother to the U.S. for treatment. Ladu does not know if he will continue to serve in the Army, but he will never forget the opportunity the United States gave him and his Family.



**U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO**

**Spc. Samuel Ladu, a translator attached to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, speaks with Iraqi Army soldiers at a traffic control point Dec. 3 in the Saydiyah community of southern Baghdad.**



# Raider K-9 team brings added capabilities to Rashid

Story by Sgt. David Hodge  
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

A Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier and his four-legged partner recently joined forces with other military dog teams at Forward Operating Base Falcon, making the streets of Baghdad a safer place for Iraqi citizens and Soldiers to live and operate.

Sgt. James Harrington, a military policeman and dog handler, attached to the 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, and his K-9, Ryky, patrol the streets and communities of southern Baghdad's Rashid district to search for weapons and make Soldiers a more effective force.

Harrington assigned to the 947th Military Police Detachment, part of the 3rd Infantry Regiment, "The Old Guard," stationed out of Fort Myer, Va., and the three-year-old Belgian Malinois completed approximately 52 missions and uncovered more than 25 finds since arriving to Rashid in October.

Harrington said that Ryky made several significant finds since beginning her mission in Baghdad, to include an AK-47 rifle hidden in a false ceiling and four mortar rounds that led to the discovery of a large mound of hollowed-out munitions.

Ryky detects odors from many types of munitions, such as ammunition, weapons, mortar rounds, artillery rounds, homemade explosives, and trigger devices with residue on them.

Harrington, a native of New Orleans, said that what makes the hollow ceiling discovery so significant is the fact that most K-9s do not acknowledge space above their own height.

"Ryky is a very friendly dog," explained Harrington, a former infantryman in the Marines. "She is not a trained attack dog, so I allow her to be sociable with Soldiers. I let others pet her, because it is a big morale booster."

Harrington met Ryky at the Specialized Service Dog School at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio.

"At the school, the dogs are exposed to helicopter rides, simulated gunfire, and simulated mortars to see how they react," said Harrington, a 14-year military service veteran with six deployments since 1995. "The dogs must be confident around the noises; they can't just take off running."

Capable of detecting 19 separate odors on the battlefield and the ability to run off of a leash, the SSD dogs have a distinct advantage out in sector, said Harrington.

"Having Sgt. Harrington and the SSD dog gives me the extra capability to unleash the dog into an open area," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Ogle, who hails from Dayton, Ohio and is the kennel master for the Falcon K-9 Team, 40th MP Det., from Fort Sill, Okla., attached to the 1st STB.

"It is that off-leash capability that puts the handler out of danger," he said.

Harrington said he feels the ability to multi-task while operating in sector and conducting weapon searches is an important quality dog handlers should possess.

"I have to be able to watch for my security, watch for the dog's security, watch what she is searching, and finally lead the dog in the direction I want her to search in next," he explained. "I always have to be two steps ahead."

Recently, Harrington and Ryky cleared a 600-meter portion of a main thoroughfare in Baghdad for a distinguished visitor, and it took them approximately one hour.

"It would take another dog three hours to complete that stretch of road because they would be on a six-foot leash and the handler has to present everything to the dog," Harrington stated.

Usually, the team uses a leash while out in sector due to stray dogs and small confined areas, he added, but, if needed, Ryky could be up to 200 yards away and still effectively search an area.

"It takes me out of the equation in case something was to go wrong; we lose a dog, but we don't lose a handler," explained Harrington, who has approximately two years experience with dogs.

According to Harrington, the SSD program has potential and is quickly becoming more widespread across all facets of the military.

One particular advantage of SSDs is the dog graduates ready to deploy right after completing the school, added Harrington.

Normal working dogs leave

Ryky, a three-year-old Belgian Malinois, is a Specialized Service Dog capable of detecting 19 different odors. She is currently serving the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad.



Sgt. James Harrington, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

their school able to detect nine odors and receive additional training by their handlers in theater, said Harrington.

It is said in the "dog world" that the dog always out ranks the handler because the dog will lead the handler to where the odor originates, said Harrington.

"I think Ryky and I make Soldiers' jobs easier; because we can search faster, the dog can smell better, and she leads from the front," Harrington stated.

In the future, the need for working dogs may increase on the battlefield thanks to their keen sense of smell and ability to discover weapons with minimal Soldier over watch.

The Falcon K-9 Team currently keeps seven dogs in its kennels to support military operations in southern Baghdad, explained Ogle, who has six years experience handling dogs.



U.S. Army Photo courtesy of Sgt. James Harrington

Sgt. James Harrington, a dog handler from New Orleans, attached to the 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, poses with Ryky during a mission Nov. 24 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.



# Raider mail team keeps mail room operations to standard *Renegades' morale through the roof*

Story and photos by Sgt. David Hodge  
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B



Sgt. Frederick Gregory, an infantryman from Houston, assigned to the Operations Section, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, picks-up letters and packages Dec. 10 from the United States Postal Service Forward Operating Base Falcon Post Office, located in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. Certified mail handlers from different sections within the brigade headquarters rotate the responsibility of the additional duty each day.

**D**uring deployments, Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers receive care packages and personal items from Family and friends back home.

The hard work and dedication of a team of certified mail handlers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, keeps morale high for the Soldiers of the 1st BCT Headquarters and Command, especially during the holiday season.

Approximately a dozen certified mail handlers make up the Raider Mail Team, led by Sgt. 1st Class Wanda Tapp-Kratzer, the logistics noncommissioned officer-in-charge for the 1st BCT "Raiders," 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

Tapp-Kratzer, a Houston native, oversees mail room operations that include picking up and sorting mail from the United States Postal Service Forward Operating Base Falcon Post Office and ensuring the mail room is opened on time daily.

On occasion, when the certified mail handlers are busy, Tapp-Kratzer travels across the FOB to pick up mail herself and operates the 1st BCT Headquarters mail room herself, often stopping

Soldiers in the hallways to tell them about their packages.

Random inspections by the post office could cause the mail room to be closed if a violation is found, said Tapp-Kratzer, who is known by many across the Raider Brigade as "Sergeant T.K."

After the first inspection of the mail room, the inspector said the conditions were the best he had seen on FOB Falcon in a long time, said Tapp-Kratzer, whose father is a former 4th Infantry Division command sergeant major.

"Everybody knows my standards and that I don't want the post office to close the mail room," she stated. "I got all the mail handlers on the same sheet of music. They have done outstanding work."

Mail operations also have a serious affect on Soldiers' morale, said Tapp-Kratzer.

"With Christmas around the corner, it is important to get the Soldiers their mail every day," she added.

The mail room experienced an influx in care packages for Thanksgiving and Christmas, with sometimes more than a dozen large boxes arriving at a time for a single Soldier.

"The mail serves as a connection from home to a

combat zone for a Soldier," said Sgt. Frederick Gregory, an infantryman from Houston, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. "I love to boost morale, and morale makes Soldiers work more proficiently while deployed to a combat zone."

Sgt. Charles Kowalski, an infantryman who serves as a Battle NCO for the HHD "Renegades," 1st BCT, said he also believes correspondence and packages from home improve the overall morale of the Soldiers and the entire unit.

"People are happy when they get their mail," he said. "It also gives me a break from my normal job."

At first, Kowalski thought the additional duty would not be very rewarding work but soon realized the impact the letters and packages have on Soldiers.

"If someone's mail is ruined, the responsibility falls on the mail room's workers," said Kowalski, who hails from Bristol, Conn., and plans to someday open a fine dining restaurant.

The additional mail room duty keeps the Raider mail team busy at all hours of the day and is open for business twice each day.



Sgt. Charles Kowalski, a native of Bristol, Conn., makes a list of mail recipients to post outside the Headquarters Mail Room Dec. 10 at Forward Operating Base Falcon, while Sgt. Frederick Gregory, a native of Houston, sorts mail in the 1st BCT Mail Room, at Forward Operating Base Falcon, located in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. Kowalski and Gregory, both certified mail handlers and infantrymen, assigned to the Operations Section, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, are responsible for picking up mail from the United States Postal Service FOB Falcon Post Office and sorting letters and packages for the Soldiers of the 1st "Raider" Brigade.



# Raider Command Team visits Soldiers throughout Rashid

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B



Col. Ted Martin, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Bobb, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, traveled to combat outposts and joint security stations on Christmas Day in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad to show their appreciation for the Soldiers who continue to serve during the holiday season.

"I'd like to wish all the 'Raider' Brigade Soldiers out there and their Families back home a merry Christmas and a happy New Year," said Martin, a native of Jacksonville Beach, Fla. "God bless you all."

Checking on morale and wishing their troops, a "merry Christmas," the 1st BCT's command group toured the familiar COPs and JSSs where "Raider" Brigade Soldiers and Rashid district's Iraqi Security Forces worked together for more than nine months.

Observing the holidays is important to the Soldiers, even in a combat zone, because being together with

Family is an American tradition, said 1st Sgt. Kenneth Hignight, Company D, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Leaders try to maintain the unit's morale during Christmas by providing the Soldiers time to call home, enjoy a special meal and the camaraderie of being together in a combat zone, explained Hignight, a native of Rock Island, Ill.

Another important tradition during the holiday season is a visit from leaders and commanders to show that they care about their Soldiers, he explained.

"It means that they care enough to take the time out of their schedules to just come out and say hello. (It's) not talk about operations, not talk about tactics; but to just come out, see how the Soldiers are doing and say, 'Merry Christmas.'"

Another part of the holiday tradition, units normally hang the holiday decorations, adorning plastic trees with garlands and lights, and prepare a special

meal for the Soldiers to provide everyone a change of scenery from their everyday missions, said 1st Lt. John Klein, executive officer, Co. A, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt.

"We have a special lunch or dinner prepared for the guys, something a little different, a little nicer than usual," said Klein, a native of Edmonds, Wash.

The unit stays busy with its mission, so modifying patrol schedules to allow Soldiers more time during the holidays is not always an option, he added.

"The platoons have gift exchanges, and do things on their own; I think it's important just because it's something different," explained Klein.

Food Service Specialists responsible for operating mobile kitchen trailers at COPs and JSSs prepare roasted turkey, prime rib, savory fresh stuffing, mashed potatoes, buttered green beans, dinner rolls, turkey gravy, assorted holiday deserts, salads, eggnog and a cider bar for the Soldiers Christmas meal, said

Col. Ted Martin, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, wishes a Merry Christmas to Spc. Justin Fenn, wheeled-vehicle mechanic from Myrtle Point, Ore., assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., Dec. 25 at a joint security station in southern Baghdad.

Pfc. Danielle Sedano, a food service specialist, assigned to Forward Support Company D, 4th Support Bn., attached to Troop B, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

"The Christmas meal is important to the Soldiers, who are far away from home and Family," said Sedano, who hails from Grand Haven, Mich. "We try to keep everyone happy and keep the morale up; and the decorations are also a nice way to celebrate."

Sedano and co-worker Pfc. Constance Pearson said they work through the night and into the next day with preparations for the Christmas meal, and during the time in-between decorate the COP's chow hall, hanging streamers and balloons and Christmas decorations to help keep the Soldiers spirits high.

"I think it helps keep the Soldiers motivated, helps to keep them going on, and like helps them think about one step closer to finally going home," said Pearson, a food service specialist assigned to FSC D, 4th Supt. Bn., attached to 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt.

"Observing special occasions together means we can finally celebrate with our comrades here and celebrate all the hard work we're doing out here; and it gives us some time to relax and think about being home," said Pearson,

who calls Long Beach, Calif. home.

Everyday is the busiest day of the year for the cooks forward deployed to support the combat units, agreed Pearson and Sedano; Christmas is just a little busier, they explained.

"We work a little bit harder always trying to... make sure everything's right, but the (Dining Facility) section back at Forward Operating Base Falcon, they help us out too," Pearson said. "They are the ones who are catering in our lunch for us today, so we can prepare for dinner."

Whether serving on COPs, JSSs or FOBs, Raider Soldiers made the time despite their ongoing missions to join together on Christmas Day, enjoy a meal and remember the reasons why they serve, said Bobb, who hails from the Isles of Trinidad, West Indies.

"This is not a typical Christmas," Bobb said. "This is what we do. I think we ought to remember the holidays as they come and go, but there are those special times when I think we ought to thank God that we are all still alive, and pray for the Families, the sons and daughters, the husbands and wives here and back home, whose lives are forever changed and will never be the same, and pray for the wounded Soldiers still recovering."



# Happy Holidays



*From the Raider Brigade*