



Homeward Bound

STORY BY
By Spc. Opal Vaughn
14th Public Affairs Detachment

JALEEL, Iraq - "Mister, mister," yells an Iraqi school girl. "Surah," she smiles pretending to take a picture as she gestures the action of taking a picture with her tiny fingers.

Slowly a crowd of children begin to gather around chanting, "Mister, surah, surah." Unable to resist, a Soldier pulls out a personal digital camera and snaps a couple photos, showing them to the curious kids.

Years ago, before the initial invasion by U.S. troops in 2003, Hadia'l Sadun was considered one of the more dangerous areas in Iraq, according to Capt. Joel Glover, a fire support officer with 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

"This place is considered the birthplace of the al-Qaida," Glover stated. "The people were terrorized so much they were driven from their homes. They are just now starting to go home. Recently, 45 displaced families returned home after being forced to live with relatives, squatting in abandoned buildings, even living in cars or on the streets."

Glover continued stating, "We had an official ceremony to reopen the town, signifying the Iraqi government and its people are making big steps and great strides. Gen. Hassam has been helping out by getting other government officials involved in this whole process. The best thing is there is no U.S. involvement here, only Iraqi," Glover stated. "We're just here to watch and take notes." This type of interaction only highlights the partnership between the Iraqi and Coalition Forces.

Based on the many smiles and warm welcomes given to the Soldiers, Iraqi army and government officials visiting the area, no one would ever imagine any of the local people had been displaced from their homes for so long. Each and every Iraqi child and adult greeted everyone, Iraqis and Americans alike, with a gleeful smile.

"Their homes and their schools were



Lt. Col. Matt Anderson, commander, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, poses with a group of local Iraqi boys at an elementary school in Hadia'l Sadun, Iraq, Dec. 30.

blown up by al-Qaida," said Mouded Tahir Mohammed, the education director. "I'm surprised to see so many of them going on as if nothing has ever happened. But we still want to build more buildings so that the school houses can be reopened and the children can continue to get an education."

Along with the director of education, Staff Brig. Gen. Saaeb, 18th Iraqi Army Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, Nahia Buhritz Mayor Hassam and Lt. Col. Matt Anderson, commander, 2-8 FA, 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div. also visited with the local people.

The visit focused on opening up the communication lines between the local Iraqi people in each community and the Iraqi government something that shows progress.

"This is a first good step toward the healing process and turning over Iraq," Anderson stated. "Currently, we are still working with the Iraqi government officials so that when the Iraqi army makes a promise to its people, we ensure they keep it."

Now that it is safe for the local people to return, the government has been doing their part as well, working for the local citizens.

"Mohammed, Gen. Hassam and Saaeb put together this package so the local people could give an assessment of surroundings," Glover stated. "This joint operation between the IA, sheiks and local governments, gives them a chance to visit the schools and talk with the students and teachers to see what they need; with regards to improvements, problems, assistance, pretty much anything."

When al-Qaida was still in power, according to Glover, attendance in schools was not too popular. "Before, teachers and students were too afraid to go to school. Now, the school teachers are reassuring Saaeb they will have 100 percent attendance of both students and teachers," Glover continued. "But it's only because most of them are just now feeling safe enough to

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U.S. Forces Transfer Riyadh Train Station Back to Iraqis

STORY BY

By Spc. Karla P. Elliot

11th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq – As part of the new security agreement, and due to improved security in the city of Riyadh, Coalition forces and local Iraqi government officials held a ceremony to transfer the Riyadh Train Station, formerly known by coalition forces as Patrol Base Howell, back to the Kirkuk Department of Transportation Jan. 3 during a ceremony highlighting the progress Iraq has made.

"The train station transfer went smoothly and the sounds of trains will signal a return to normalcy," said Shakir Mahmood, director of transportation for Kirkuk province.

The transfer is a major step toward restoring the rail service in Kirkuk province. The last task is to complete the final span of the Bayji Railroad Bridge that links the Kirkuk rail line with the Samarra to Bayji line.

"Once the train station is functioning, it will help energize the economy as well as decrease the number of commercial vehicles travelling on the roads," said Mohamad Ahmad Hussein, the mayor of Riyadh.

Coalition forces personnel also noted the significance of the event and the progress the Government of Iraq has recently made.

"I'm honored to be here this morning among you to mark the transfer of the Riyadh Train Station from Coalition forces to the people of Iraq," said Lt. Col. Kenneth R. Casey, commander of 1st Battalion, 67th Armor Regiment, attached to the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. "Today represents one of the many transitions happening across Iraq, with the improved security situation provided by the Iraqi Police, Iraqi Army, Sons of Iraq and U.S. forces." Lt. Col. Casey spoke on behalf of Coalition forces, highlighting the partnership between Iraqi and Coalition forces which made the transfer a reality.

The transfer played an important part in Coalition force efforts to start giving their areas of responsibility back to the Iraqis.

"Patrol Base Howell is a great example of what U.S. forces are trying to do, which is to give the infrastructure back to the Iraqis to use for their intended purposes," Casey said.

Patrol Base Howell has sheltered coalition forces for more than a year, and



Shakir Mahmood, director of transportation for the Kirkuk province of Iraq, gives a speech before guests invited to the ceremonial transfer of the Riyadh Train Station, formerly known as Patrol Base Howell, in Riyadh, Jan. 3. Patrol Base Howell was closed and turned over to the Iraqi government as the Iraqi and U.S. security agreement is starting to be implemented in the Kirkuk province.

many Soldiers and Coalition force members have called this place a home since then.

"It's hard for us to leave because this has been our home for a while," said Capt. Thomas Strum, commander of D Co., 1st Battalion, 67th Armor Regt. "It has been really great to live so close to the people that we serve here in the town of Riyadh, but this move is a very important step forward."

"We'll move on and continue to do what we do," said 1st Sgt. Michael Oliver, 1st Sgt., Co. D, 1-67th Armor Regt. "Although we're not here, we are still going to help them build a better country for future generations."

"The movement of American forces within Iraq shows the people that there is validity to the security agreement," said Strum. "This is definitely a symbol of Iraqi sovereignty," he concluded.

STAY ARMY

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return home and continue to get an education, something most of us take for granted." The fact that students and teachers do have this feeling of safety is something that can be directly contributed to the progress that has been achieved.

Many of the people returning home have nothing left but a pile of rubble or nothing at all. Under Iraq's new government, the Internally Displaced Person program was established for local nationals allowing families to return home and rebuild again, Glover stated. The program assesses the damage to a home and gives a family the amount the home is valued at. When money is received families can begin rebuilding.

With guided assistance, the Iraqi government has come a long way from where it once was. Many families are still living without running water, electricity or telephones. There are many unhealed scars of loss, anguish and separation which still linger from the impending threat of remaining al-Qaida members. But in due time, Iraq will one day be rid of the threat and stand on its own.

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PROJECT OPENING CELEBRATION AT HISTORICAL RUINS

STORY BY

By **Spc. Cynthia Teears**
11th Public Affairs Detachment

NINEWA PROVINCE, Iraq - Sheik Khalid of Al Jobury and Sheik Ali of Albayati hosted a construction project opening celebration for the surrounding areas of Mosul and invited key leaders to attend the ceremony held at the Assyrian Ruins in Iraq, Jan. 4.

Leaders from the military, police, construction company and surrounding towns were invited to celebrate and discuss issues concerning the new project with the Green Dream Contract Company, said Lt. Col. Chris Johnson, commander, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment.

"The company is bringing in a new project to pave the roads and train Iraqi student workers. The training consists of two to three months in the classroom and three months of on-the-job training," said Mohammed, an information technologist, working for the Green Dream Contract Company. "The company has Iraqi counterparts here to head up and assist in its management."

The students will learn road construction and repair, as well as, water projects for agriculture; such as designing, planning and the actual construction of irrigation canals.

There are 184 students slated for the program and the program is expected to expand in the future, said Mohammed.

Many people attended the celebration and some participated in Kurdish dance traditions, while others mingled. Food was prepared and served buffet style and made available to all. After eating and serving a second round of chi the leaders gathered together and were given a tour of the ruins.

"There are ruins here," said Sheik Ali of Albayati. "The Griffin's are here, at the gate of the palace, and they have been here even long before the time of Assyria."

"Archeologist have been here to look at the site before, but are not here now," said Sheik Khalid of Al Jobury. "This is where many princes stayed, using the ruins as a hideout for up to three months. In 2001, there were two griffins found near here, taller than waist high, and taken to Baghdad."

While talking about the ruins, leaders exchanged smiles and were able to get to know each other better in a more relaxed setting, something not always possible.

"The history here, it's so amazing," said Johnson.

This project opening will pave the way, literally, for Iraq and its ability to work together, government and civilians alike.

The Iraqi Army, Iraqi National Police, Iraqi Police, Green Dream Staff, U. S. Forces and all the area town and village leaders will be working together to complete this project, as well as others, making them all successful.



Spc. Hector Guzman of Cold Spring, Minn., grenadier, 1st Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, helps "The Griffins" with the security of the Assyrian Ruins during the project opening celebration in Iraq, Jan. 4. Iraqi army, Iraqi national police, Iraqi police and U.S. Forces all worked together for the security of the celebration.



Sheik Khalid of Al Jobury and Lt. Col. Chris Johnson, commander, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, laugh together as they watch the festivities at a project opening celebration in front of the Assyrian Ruins in Iraq, Jan. 4.

LIGHTNING 6

WEEKLY EDITORIAL



Maj. Gen. Robert L. Caslen, Jr.

In addition to bringing the New Year, Jan. 1, 2009 marks the beginning of a new phase for U.S. military operations in Iraq. The security agreement between the U.S. and Iraq now determines "the principal provisions and requirements that regulate the temporary presence, activities, and withdrawal of the United States Forces from Iraq." The document's official title is the *Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq on the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities during Their Temporary Presence in Iraq*.

The most significant change affected by the agreement is the basis for the authority that allows the military to conduct operations in Iraq. Rather than the authority of the United Nations, it is the authority and consent of the Government of Iraq that makes the allowances. The sovereign nation of Iraq is now responsible for, and has authority over, its own affairs. Iraqi military commanders are now primarily responsible for planning and conducting security operations and U.S. commanders must coordinate their activities through these Iraqi headquarters. Iraqi Army and Police units now conduct the majority of security operations with U.S. personnel supporting by providing capabilities not yet present in Iraqi formations. This partnership between Iraqi security forces and U.S. units is considered a key tenet of the strategy to maintain the gains made by the surge while at the same time improving their professionalism and capabilities.

Government and military contracts must now be approved by the Iraqi Government and contractor employees are subject to Iraqi law and jurisprudence. For the first time since the establishment of "No Fly Zones" following the First Gulf War, Iraq now controls the entirety of its airspace.

Another key provision of the security agreement changes the U.S. military's ability to arrest and detain Iraqi citizens. An official warrant issued by an Iraqi judge is now required before any Iraqi citizens is captured or held. Exceptions to this can occur as a part of an act of self-defense or in response to a hostile act, but even in a case where no warrant is present, the detained persons must be transferred to Iraqi custody within twenty-four hours of capture.

Other changes not explicitly laid out in the security agreement will perhaps be the most relevant to the majority of Iraqis. With implementation of the formal measures required by the agreement, U.S. commanders are taking measures to help signal a return to a more normal daily life for Iraqis. Military patrols and convoys long accustomed to owning the roadways by forcing Iraqi drivers to stop or pull off of the street are now making an effort to be less intrusive by sharing the roads with traffic. Police departments rather than military units are being promoted in the majority of Iraqi cities and towns as the primary providers of security and safety with U.S. units continuing to assist and advise. Over the next several months, through coordination with Iraqi government leaders, several U.S. outposts inside city limits will begin closing, helping to further the sense that life is returning to normal.

The implementation of the security agreement marks the birth of a new sovereign Iraqi nation and establishes a set point in time for the withdrawal of U.S. forces. It is a critical step forward towards a fully autonomous and self-dependant Iraq. Most importantly, it lays the foundation for a future of long term cooperation and partnership between two democratic states; the Republic of Iraq and the United States of America.



Robert L. Caslen, Jr.
Major General, USA
Commanding

NEWS FROM THE HOME FRONT

HAWAII

The Kilauea summit eruption that began with a bang at Halema'uma'u Crater on March 19 stopped spewing rock particles in mid-December, but continues to vent a lot of sulfur dioxide gas.

The March-to-December eruption was Kilauea's longest summit eruption since 1924.

Whether it has truly ended or is "in repose" remains to be seen, say scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey's Hawaiian Volcano Observatory on the Big Island.

"Several lines of evidence confirm a decrease in activity at the vent in Halema'uma'u Crater," scientist-in-charge Jim Kauahikaua wrote in an update two weeks ago. They are:

- The formerly billowing white or brown gas plumes became more "wispy and translucent" in early December.

- Infrared camera photos on Dec. 31 showed that a previously open conduit in the Halema'uma'u vent has filled with rubble and is cooling.

- Sulfur dioxide emissions have dropped to their lowest rates since late 2007.

- Erupted volcanic rock fragments in the second half of December were almost entirely dust from older rocks, not newer fragments from fresh lava.

During its latest event, scientists estimate, the summit crater has so far ejected 2,540 cubic yards of tephra — rock, rock fragments and dust.

That's enough to cover a standard football field to a depth of just over 17 inches.

Volcanically speaking, that's a tiny amount, said Janet Babb, the observatory's public information geologist.

"For comparison, the volume of ash erupted from Mount St. Helens on May 18, 1980, would cover a football field to a depth of at least 150 miles," she said.

Eight explosive eruptions (March 19, April 9 and 16, Aug. 1 and 27, Sept. 2, and Oct. 12 and 14) accounted for more than 80 percent of the total volume of solids ejected from Halema'uma'u in 2008.

Sulfur dioxide levels have not yet dropped enough to safely reopen areas of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park that have been closed since February, when unsafe emission levels started coming from Halema'uma'u, Babb said.

"Background" levels of 150 to 200 metric tons per day of sulfur dioxide have been measured at Kilauea's summit for years, Babb said. But last March, the crater was spewing 10 times that.

The most recent emission rate, measured Jan. 7, was 770 metric tons a day — still too high to allow anyone but experts with special masks and protective equipment to venture

close to Halema'uma'u, officials say.

Halema'uma'u Overlook, several park trails and the portion of Crater Rim Drive between the Jaggar Museum and Chain of Craters Road also remain closed.

Sulfur dioxide, SO₂, is an invisible gas that can aggravate pre-existing heart and breathing problems such as asthma, and at high levels can be dangerous to anyone.

Since the first written accounts of Halema'uma'u in 1823, the duration of its eruptions has ranged from over a century to less than a day, according to the observatory Web site.

One scientist described efforts to unravel the mystery of the summit vent as being "perched on Pele's roof, trying to understand what is going on inside the house by watching smoke rise from the chimney and listening very carefully to the sounds coming from within."

Meanwhile, up to 1,500 people a day are visiting Hawai'i County's viewing area (open 2 to 10 p.m. daily) outside the national park, on the Kalapana side of the volcano, said Quince Mento, the county civil defense administrator.

There, spectators can safely watch the glow of molten lava entering the ocean after dark, or see the steam plume by day.

ALASKA

Members of the Alaska Arc User group volunteered their time and descended on the Beach Lake Sled Dog trails Dec. 6 with the goal of creating an accurate map of the established trail network.

"They (the Chugiak Dog Musher's Association) had a makeshift map of the trails, but they needed something more accurate," said Joel Cusick, who coordinated the mapping project for the Alaska Arc volunteers. "The trails were updated last summer and the map was in need of some updating."

"Our existing map is a rough sketch of where the trail goes that was drawn into an aerial photo," said Lexi Hill, president of the Chugiak Dog Musher's Association. "Thanks to the efforts of these volunteers we'll have an accurate rendition of our trails, showing their exact locations and exact distances."

Working with the Eagle River-Chugiak Parks and Recreation Department and the local dog mushers, six volunteers, armed with GPS systems, set out to map the centerline, or middle of the trail, of the nearly 25 miles of Beach Lake trails.

"I've been on the trails as a participant in the annual businesspersons sled dog race," Cusick said. "But this time we used snowmachines and an ATV to get around. I don't think we could have gotten accurate data on a dog sled."

By mounting the \$10,000 GPS mapping

systems on the ATVs and snowmachines, the volunteers were able to collect the needed data in about six hours.

The mappers also used digital cameras to take photos of locations and significant trailside features, including signs, junctions and swampy areas.

"We could take the photos and the map data and make a virtual map in the future," he said. "Our goal was just to collect the data. It's up to the dog mushers club to make a map from the information we collected."

A total of 25.3 miles of trails were documented during the mapping, including exact measurements of the various trail loops in the network.

Hill said the club will try to raise the funds needed to take the data collected and produce maps of the trail.

TEXAS

When a white pit bull broke down a 4-foot fence Tuesday and stared down Brian Davis, 24, he fired a warning shot to scare the dog.

The warning shot wasn't enough, so Davis shot and killed the dog.

That warning shot is now part of Davis' problem. He was arrested and arraigned on charges of carrying his pistol on him without a license and firing it within city limits.

The first part of his problem is simple. He carried a 9 mm handgun without a license while he was walking his 10-month-old boxer. Davis, who moved to Killeen in late 2006 from Maryland, assumed he could carry his gun without a license in Texas.

On Tuesday, he carried the gun when he walked his dog because his Zephyr Road neighborhood has frequent burglaries and menacing dogs in many of the backyards.

Davis said he shouldn't have carried his gun, but he felt he had to because the city has not done enough to protect him by going after residents who mistreat animals, making neighborhoods unsafe to walk through.

He believes the pit bull would have killed him and his dog if he didn't have his gun.

On Tuesday, Davis was walking his dog near his home, when a pit bull from the back of a home on Patriotic Street, broke through a fence and ran within 10 feet of Davis.

"As God is my witness, the dog was looking me in the eye like, 'You're dead.'"

He fired a warning shot to scare off the pit bull, then between three and four more shots to hit the dog when it kept coming at him.

Killeen police spokeswoman Carroll Smith said, without specific knowledge of Davis' case, that the warning shot might be what got Davis charged with firing his gun in the city limits because it was not aimed at the dog, and the bullet could have strayed.

Davis said that decision has cost him \$650 in discounted bond fees and several sleepless nights, and he hopes that is all.

LIGHTNING HERO OF THE WEEK

SPC Robert M. Swiney 2/C/1-24 IN, 1st SBCT, 25th ID Arlington, Texas

On 18 December 2008, SPC Swiney saved the lives of two Iraqis who were wounded by an IED blast about 50 meters from his position during a Joint Combat Patrol through Little Abu Dayda. Specialist Swiney personally rendered aid to an injured Sol member, applying a tourniquet, multiple pressure dressings, and emplaced a nasal tube to assist in breathing. At the same time, SPC Swiney directed his fellow platoon members in the care of an IP Officer also wounded in the blast. Specialist Swiney's quick action, knowledge and professionalism saved the lives of both Iraqis.

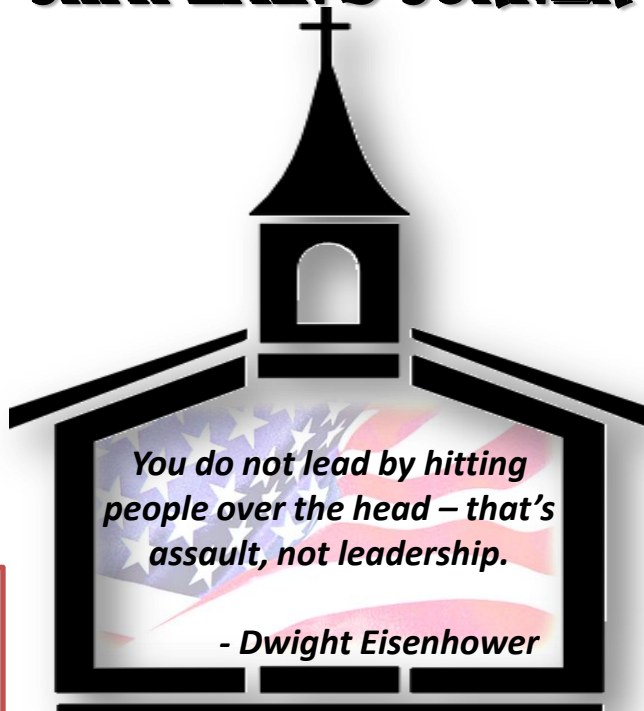


Sudoku

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CHAPLAIN'S CORNER





U.S Denies Israeli Request to Attack Iran

President Bush rejected several Israeli requests last year for weapons and permission for a potential airstrike inside Iran, the author of an investigative report told CNN.

Israel approached the White House in early 2008 with three requests for an attack on Iran's main nuclear complex, said New York Times reporter David Sanger. His article appears in the newspaper on Sunday. According to Sanger, Israel wanted specialized bunker-busting bombs, equipment to help refuel planes making flights into Iran and permission to fly over Iraq to reach the major nuclear complex at Natanz, the site of Iran's only known uranium enrichment plant.

The White House "deflected" the first two requests and denied the last, Sanger said. "They feared that if it appeared that the United States had helped Israel strike Iran, using Iraqi airspace, that the result in Iraq could be the expulsion of the American troops (from Iraq)," he said.

Bush, instead, persuaded Israeli officials to not proceed with the attack by sharing with them some details of covert U.S. operations aimed at sabotaging Iran's nuclear ambitions, Sanger said. The ongoing operations are designed to undermine Iran's ability to produce weapons-grade fuel and designs it needs to produce a workable nuclear weapon, the newspaper said.

"We know that the U.S. has been trying to conduct covert industrial espionage, if you will, against Iran's nuclear program for many years," said CNN's Pentagon Correspondent Barbara Starr. "[They have been] going to the suppliers, going other places; trying to make sure that things get messed up, if you will; that parts may not be what they should be; that certain processes may not work right. Anything that they can do to jam the work to delay the program."

Sanger said he based his report on conversations with intelligence officials, none of whom would speak on the record because of the topic's sensitivity.

"I suspect the Bush administration probably isn't going to comment very much on the details of this story, given the nature of this kind of intelligence operation and the sensitivity of the relationship with Israel," he said.

SPORTING NEWS

Broncos Hire McDaniels as Coach

The Denver Broncos are turning from "The Mastermind" to "The Wunderkind."

New England Patriots offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels has agreed to become the Broncos' next coach, team spokesman Patrick Smyth said Sunday night.

McDaniels, 32, replaces Mike Shanahan, who was fired Dec. 30 after 14 seasons with three years and \$21 million left on his contract. He's the only one of six NFL head coaches to ever get fired by the team for which he won back-to-back Super Bowls. ESPN was the first to report the hiring.

The Broncos won it all in 1997 and '98 but have slipped into mediocrity, winning just one playoff game in the decade since John Elway retired.

McDaniels is a rising star who spent the first eight years of his NFL coaching career in New England, where he worked his way up from personnel assistant in the scouting department to offensive coordinator for Bill Belichick.

Under his tutelage, Tom Brady threw for a record 50 touchdowns last season and the Patriots came within a whisker of the first 19-0 season in NFL history.

McDaniels' reputation grew ever larger this year when Brady was lost with a knee injury in the opener and Matt Cassel, who hadn't started a game since high school, led the Patriots to an 11-5 record.

McDaniels is the third member of Belichick's coaching staff to become a head coach in the NFL, following Romeo Crennel with Cleveland in 2005 and Eric Mangini, who joined the Jets a year later. Both were fired this offseason with Mangini replacing Crennel in Cleveland.

McDaniels was the second of seven candidates the Broncos' brain trust interviewed. Owner Pat Bowlen, chief operating officer Joe Ellis and personnel chief Jim Goodman met with him in Rhode Island on Jan. 4, and Goodman conducted a second, lengthy interview with him in the Boston area.

McDaniels inherits an explosive offense that appears to be one healthy running back away from greatness and a dismal defense that needs another overhaul. That led many observers to believe defensive minds such as the Giants' Steve Spagnuolo or the Vikings' Leslie Frazier had the inside track for the job in Denver.

Frazier was unaware he was out of the running for the Broncos' job when contacted by the AP on Sunday night. He's in the

running for coaching vacancies in St. Louis and Detroit.

"It would mean a lot to have that opportunity," Frazier said. "I'm not going to lose any sleep. It would be a great opportunity, but we're close to doing something special here. We'll see what happens."

The other candidates were Raheem Morris of Tampa Bay, Rick Dennison of Denver, Jason Garrett of Dallas and Todd Bowles of Miami.

The new coach won't have as much power as Shanahan, who had final say on just about everything as vice president of football operations. Bowlen said he'll begin searching for a general manager after he hires his coach.

Jay Cutler, who broke several passing records this year and was selected for his first Pro Bowl, publicly criticized Bowlen's firing of Shanahan and the owner quickly reached out to his franchise quarterback, telling him he'd keep him in the loop on the search.

"Hopefully we can continue to improve. I'm hoping we can keep some of our offensive coaches, keep some of those guys around," wide receiver Brandon Stokley told the AP on Sunday night. "I think we did a good job. Hopefully we can keep getting better and bring new ideas. We have a lot of young talent."

Even Shanahan suggested on his way out the door that his successor should keep the offensive staff intact. Cutler is particularly fond of his position coach, Jeremy Bates, who called the plays last season.

Bowlen is high on running backs coach Bobby Turner, who helped turn Terrell Davis into an NFL great but whose masterpiece came in 2008, when he helped keep Denver in the playoff hunt despite losing an astonishing seven tailbacks to injured reserve.

McDaniels, who began his coaching career in 1999 as a graduate assistant under Nick Saban at Michigan State, does have some defensive experience. He helped the defensive staff in New England for three seasons before serving as quarterbacks coach in 2004. He was promoted to offensive coordinator in 2006.

The Broncos went 8-8 this season and became the first team in NFL history to blow a three-game divisional lead with three weeks left, and Shanahan was fired 48 hours later.

TASK FORCE LIGHTNING - THROUGH THE LENS



A group of 4th Platoon, D. Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, "Cacti" Soldiers secure a gateway outside of a nearby marketplace near Patrol Base Love, near Balad, Iraq, Jan. 6.



Two 4th Platoon, D. Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, "Cacti" Soldiers patrol a marketplace in the Ishaki business district, at Ishaki, Iraq, approximately 23 miles west of Balad, Jan. 6.



Warrant Officer Jamie Turner, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 25th Special Troops Battalion, 25th Infantry Division, and Capt. Antonio Hinojosa, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 25th Special Troops Battalion, 25th Infantry Division, pass out gifts and greet local Iraqi children at a marketplace outside of Patrol Base Love, near Balad, Iraq, Jan. 6.



From left, Maj. Charles Ligenfelter, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 25th Special Troops Battalion, 25th Infantry Division, Maj. Gen. Robert L. Caslen Jr., commanding general, Multi-National Division – North, Staff Sgt. Michael Iceman, HHC, 25th STB, 25th Inf. Div., and Col. Charles Evans, HHC, 25th STB, 25th Inf. Div., stand after 25th STB's first re-enlistment/promotion ceremony of the year 2009 at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq, Jan. 1.



Spc. Evan Vickrey, a small arms repairman and Everett, Wash. Native with 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, enjoys a friendly chat with Nobar Noori, a member of the Mandali Border Police, at the 8th Brigade of Border Police headquarters, near Khanaqin, Iraq, Jan. 3. The two protectors of Iraq shared stories of home and spoke highly of their respective services, outside in the cold Northern Iraq breeze.



*Brave Rifles,
Thank you for a job well done!
God Speed!*



*Brave Rifles! Veterans!
You Have Been Baptized In Fire and Blood
And Have Come Out Steel!*