

April 2009

Call of the WOLF



Volume 1, Issue 6

The Wolf's Howl



Wounded Wolves
Brooke Army Medical
Center
San Antonio, Texas

salute all of our wounded Wolves and I am honored that I could spend such precious time with these great Americans on your behalf!

I would ask that you all keep our wounded Warriors and their Families in your thoughts and prayers, many of them have a long and tough road to recovery and need our prayers and support.

There is no doubt that many challenges remain here in Diyala, so we must all stay focused and keep up the momentum.

Again, I thank our wounded Warriors, all of you and our Families for your dedication and commitment. Stay safe, continue to take care of each other, fight true, fight hard and always serve with honor!

 The Wolf

Greetings to the Arctic Wolves and to the entire Team here in Diyala Province, Iraq.

We are now past the half way point in our deployment and one thing remains true, you never cease to amaze me, the MND-N, MNC-I and Force commanders with your ability to accomplish any task regardless of the complexity. You always exceed every expectation. I thank you for your dedication, commitment and continued sacrifice.

Many of you have or will soon go on Environmental Leave. Please enjoy the well deserved time away with your family and friends, I surely enjoyed the precious time with my family. Returning from my leave, I stopped by the Brooke Army Medical

Center in San Antonio Texas and the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C. I visited with 19 of our wounded Arctic Wolves and their families. Upon reflection, this visit was perhaps one of the most humbling experiences of my Army career.

I was absolutely amazed at the Warrior spirit these men and their Families displayed. Many of them are going through painful mental and physical recovery, yet they think not of

themselves, but instead about you. They could not stop talking about the buddies in their units and wondering how the fight is going in their old stomping grounds in Diyala. I provided both groups an update on happenings in Diyala, we shared stories, and we laughed, and even shed tears with each other.

I can honestly say that I parted with our wounded Warriors with a sense of extreme gratitude, pride, and renewed commitment. I

Wounded Wolves
Walter Reed Army
Medical Center
Washington D.C.



55th Medical Company (Combat Stress Control)

Officer-In-Charge
Capt. Amy Spears
770-6115



Anger Management Class
Every Monday 1000 and 1800

Home Front Issues
Every Wednesday 1800

Be A Better Battle Buddy
Communication
Every Friday 1800

Life Skills
Resiliency, Coping Skills
Every Saturday 1000 and 1400

Sleep and Relaxation
Every Sunday 1000 and 1400

Female Activities
Every Monday 1800

Combat Stress Control is located at the Troop Medical Center on FOB Warhorse and can be reached at 770-6115. All classes are available upon request, anytime or anywhere. The 55th makes trips to each major FOB in Diyala once a month.



NCOIC
Sgt. Francis Vitiello
770-6115



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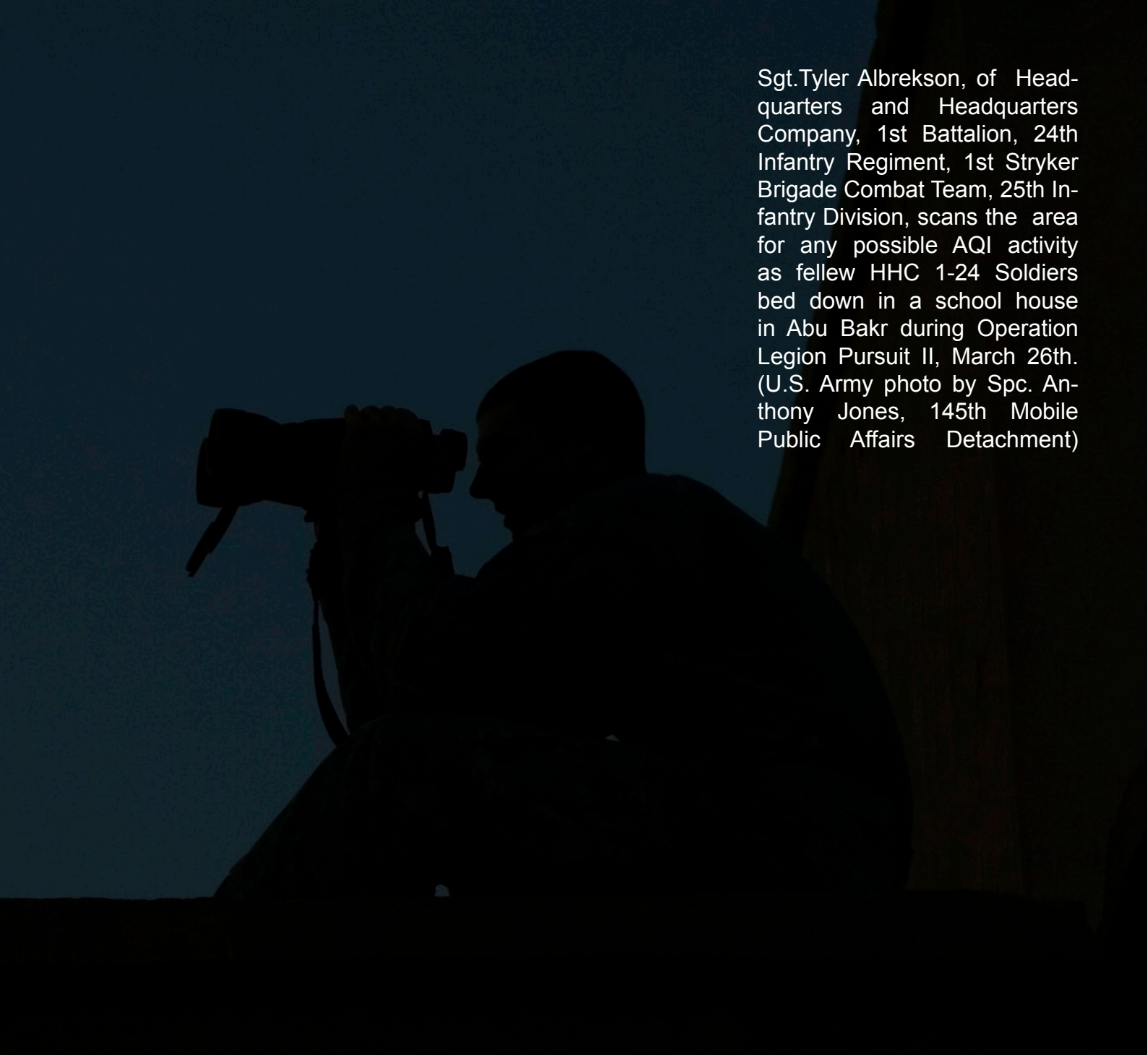
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The Call of the Wolf, a command information magazine, is authorized for members of the U.S. Army and the 1/25 SBCT community. Contents of the The Call of the Wolf are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or Department of the Army. The editorial content of the magazine are the responsibility of the 1/25 SBCT Public Affairs Office.

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Sgt. Tyler Albrekson, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, scans the area for any possible AQI activity as fellow HHC 1-24 Soldiers bed down in a school house in Abu Bakr during Operation Legion Pursuit II, March 26th. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Anthony Jones, 145th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

On the Cover

Sgt. Nathaniel Epps and military working dog Tosca, a patrol and explosive detection dog, search the debris of a demolished building while on patrol with HHC 1-24 INF during Operation Legion Pursuit II, March 26th. Tosca is a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Brigade Troops Battalion, Epps is with the 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment attached to the BTB. Both were attached to the 1-24 for the operation. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Anthony Jones, 145th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.)



Becoming a Noncommissioned Officer in the year of the NCO

Story and Photo by
Spc. Opal Vaughn
14th Public Affairs Detachment

One by one, 16 Soldiers with 25th Brigade Support Battalion are squirted with water.

As rites of passage, each Soldier is washed by their chain of command – a tradition within the Non-commissioned Officer Corps, during a ceremony held at Forward Operating Base Warhorse in the Diyala province of Iraq, Mar. 6.

Sergeants Krystal Lumpkin, Phillip Romero, Jeremiah Thompson, Cantrelle Dansby, David Plummer and Nicole Krajewski with Headquarters Headquarters Company; Sgt. Brandon Hollins with Distribution Company; Sergeants Scotty Case, Ian Jackson, Kandra Scott, Larry Vargas, Jarrod Jackson with Forward Maintenance Company; Sergeants Virginia Endo, Evette Lee-Stewart, Patricia Rogers and Michael Venturino with Brigade Support Medical Company, are all inducted into the NCO Corps by their chain of command as they complete the washing of their new sergeants' rank.

The ceremony was not just for the inductees and their sponsors but for the junior enlisted Soldiers as well.

"Reciting the 'Soldiers Request' meant a lot to me," said Pvt. 1st Class Marcia Martinez, supply, DC, reciting the "Soldiers Request," along with two other junior enlisted Soldiers.

"It means having my NCO or my higher enlisted sergeants train me to do better for myself – the 'Soldiers Request' says train me to be self sufficient so that I may lead



Sgt. Michael Venturino, honorary inductee, 25th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, is squirted with water as his newly acquired sergeant rank is washed by his chain of command.

the way – it's really self explanatory, but it allows me to do better for myself with their support and their guidance," Martinez stated. "The ceremony was a good experience for me and for my peers. The more I rehearsed, the more it had meaning and it caused me to say the 'Soldiers Request' during the ceremony with more meaning."

Instilling good values and continuing in the traditions of the NCO Corps are important, especially in leading and training junior Soldiers, stated Dill.

"It was a really good ceremony. I'm really glad that they went back to the old school ways which allows our new Soldiers to see it," said Staff Sgt. April Dill, NCOIC, DC. "This ceremony teaches Soldiers the values of the 'NCO Creed' – to know it, live it, train and lead Soldiers by it. It also allows our junior level Soldiers the opportunity to see how NCOs get to the next level."

But NCOs in military force history is not just an American Idea, Sgt. 1st Class Cherrie Kennedy, 25th BSB, said. NCO history started long before this nation was even formed.

"The origin of the NCO in military forces is said to be traced back to the Roman Armies and their system of clerks," Kennedy stated. "It's no wonder that Rudyard Kipling wrote, 'The backbone of the Army is the noncommissioned officer,' in his poem 'The Heathen.'" Regardless of where, when, under what circumstances or by whom it is used, leadership boils down to getting Soldiers to willfully carry out orders and accomplish the mission. The more expert the leader, the more likely Soldiers are to follow. NCOs must be able to motivate and inspire Soldiers to carry out missions for the greater good of the Army."

Just Another Day in the Groves

Story and Photo provided by
1-5 INF

The Palm Groves are fertile land carved from the Diyala River that snakes through the city of Baqubah, full of family farms growing oranges and pomegranates. Thick vegetation separates it from the surrounding area, creating a jungle-like atmosphere. The dense vegetation of the Palm Groves has made it easy for Al-Qaeda in Iraq to utilize the area, both in the past and the present. From these locations AQI members store, transport and fire mortars and rockets into innocent populations attempting to further their reign of terror.

Members of Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, along with Iraqi Security Forces in the area have begun to counter these tactics with an operation of

their own: search out these originating locations and choke off the enemy's ability to launch attacks from the Palm Groves.

The joint operation's focus is primarily to find (and destroy) the originating points previously utilized by the enemy to conduct indirect fire on an unsuspecting public.

The operation however, is more than just patrolling the Groves. Soldiers are scouting possible for paths of movement the enemy may take in order to better understand how these attacks occur and how they can be stopped. Along with these searches, 1-5 Inf. and Iraqi Army soldiers are searching for weapons caches that have been hidden among the dense vegetation. These caches are often placed in farming areas which can pose a serious threat to the locals, and has hindered the ability for local residents to farm safely.

On February 10, 1-5 Inf. Soldiers, working alongside local Iraqi Police, were conducting a sweep of the

Palm Groves in Burhitz.

The movement was slow and arduous due to the thick vegetation of the land. As the platoon pushed to the Diyala River to look for origination sites along the riverbank and surrounding orchard, a CF Soldier noticed a bag that seemed out of place for the area near a previously documented origination site.

Inside of the bag Soldiers found approximately 20 pounds of explosives, an anti-armor mine, three mortar rounds and five RKG-3 grenades. The patrol leader immediately called for Explosive Ordnance Disposal to analyze the explosives found and to destroy the rest of the cache found. During the cordoning of the cache four fishermen were seen in the area and questioned by Iraqi Police for knowledge related to the cache. After it was concluded that the fishermen had not been involved with the cache, they were allowed to return to fishing the area.

This operation is a never ending battle to secure the Palm Groves and ensure safety and security for all of those living in the area. For the Soldiers of Company B and the Iraqi Security Forces they work with, this is the front line..in their fight to free a nation.

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division patrol and search the palm groves in the city of Baqubah.



A soldier in camouflage gear is shown from the chest up. A white tag with the name 'LEWIS' is pinned to their chest. The background is dark and textured.

Scorpion Transport

Story and Photos by
Spc. Opal Vaughn
14th Public Affairs Detachment

Calf length socks, khaki shorts, shirt buttoned to the collar, hair gelled and whipped to perfection – from top to bottom an air of confidence transmits from this body of excellence.

Now picture this - worn khaki boots caked in who knows what, dirt covered digital print trousers and shirt aimed to camouflage in varying environments and hair buzzed to the scalp – from top to bottom a sense of accomplishment echoes from this body of stealth.

What's the difference between the two?

Transportation is perhaps not a glamorous, sexy or even stylish job, but it is one that must be done.

"We are an important asset to not only Soldiers but for civilians as well," said Staff Sgt. Apostolos Gregorious, platoon sergeant, Scorpion Platoon, 5th Squadron, 1st

U.S. Cavalry, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. "We have a wide variety of things we are tasked with, but mainly we conduct security for convoys, route clearance and provide escort for PSYOP and Civil Affairs."

Being a small platoon has its advantages especially if a detour has to be taken during a mission.

"Our job allows other maneuver units to conduct missions," said Sgt. Leonel Vazquez, section sergeant, Scorpion Platoon, 5-1 Cav. "It's very important that we are able to accomplish our mission so that the actual maneuver units (are able to), the ones that do all the dirty work. We are not actually per se a maneuver platoon, but in the event that we are engaged by the enemy we're trained to take care of things as needed."

Regardless of how big or small

Spc. Kevin Lewis, a driver with Scorpion Platoon, 5th Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, checks his computer systems in order to head out on convoy while at Forward Operating Base Warhorse

Scorpion platoon may be, they always accomplish their mission.

"With this platoon, it's the Soldiers that make the missions happen," Gregorious stated. "All we have is each other, so it is up to the Soldiers and my NCOs to make things happen."

With duty, pride and honor, Scorpion continues to set standards in everything they do.

"We're very detailed, crisp and we're trained only to do the best," Gregorious stated. "I feel that this platoon...of communications specialists, mechanics and a couple combat arms guys that were thrown together...through rigorous training we are excelling and doing it better than any other guys."

Working together as a team to get the mission accomplished is what the Army is all about.

"We are part of a team and we're helping others along as well, for anything, Scorpion is always here to help. Even though we operate independently we are still part of the big family in support of the mission, 100 percent," Gregorious stated.

"We only do the best, we're Scorpion," Gregorious stated.

The Strength of The Pack

Story and Photos by
Pfc. Alisha Nye
14th Public Affairs Detachment

Rudyard Kipling once said, "For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack."

This is an ideal that Soldiers from 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division personify on a daily basis. The 1st SBCT Arctic Wolves, stationed out of Fort Wainwright, Alaska, currently serving in the Diyala Province of Iraq, are Soldiers not without pride in their unit, as well as fellow Arctic Wolves.

In the deployed environments of Forward Operating Bases Warhorse, Normandy and Caldwell, as well as any outlying combat out posts, the Combat Wood and Sign Shop, located out of FOB Warhorse, is the pinnacle of the embodiment of this unit's pride.

The shop is worked by four Soldiers – Sgt. Arthur Sheble III, Spc. Douglas Boyce, Spc. Royce McCoy and Spc. Mark Wilkins – and produces works of utility and of art depicting imagery projected to instill unit pride in the soldiers of the brigade. This includes a large mural on cement walls located outside of the brigade headquarters building at FOB Warhorse.

"Out here we've been tasked with the identity of the brigade," said Boyce, the resident graphic artist/designer of the wood shop. "We painted the walls in front of the brigade."

While Boyce thinks the mural, which depicts the crests of all the battalions within 1st SBCT as well as a Stryker and the 25th Infantry Division crest, will

instill pride, he believes it is more for visitors than the Soldiers.

"The command sergeant major of the brigade said something about instilling unit pride," he said. "That's one of the reasons he liked those walls in front of the brigade. I thought that was more for the officers and sergeant majors and generals and Iraqi Security Forces who visit."

That's why Boyce has decided to do something a little more for the Soldiers, he said.

"I'm painting a different wall for the Soldiers," Boyce said.

This wall will portray a grey wolf busting through the 25th Infantry division unit patch – depicting both the Arctic Wolves and the division they are part of.

Though painting is a big part of what these four Soldiers do, it is just the tip of the iceberg of the various utilities and artworks they have provided to the brigade.

"We do whatever they tell us to do, from the ground up," said Sheble, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Combat Wood and Sign Shop.

Projects have included building stairs, creating new road signs, building pieces of furniture, creating new podiums, making sculptures, making various hand-carved, wood-burned works such as memorials, plaques and unique awards as well as painting a slew of different walls for various other projects, Sheble explained. This is done with whatever materials that can be found, he said.

"We don't throw away anything," he said. "We salvage everything. You never know when it will come in handy."

Sheble said that he and Boyce have used materials such as slate from old pool tables, wood from

old ping-pong tables and old caulking found in a basement to make things such as bases for sculptures, plaques for recreation rooms and molds for sculptures.

"I have twenty years of experience doing things like this," said Boyce, who has done projects for the likes of Disney, Busch Gardens and the Smithsonian. "I actually came in the army not to do stuff like this, to get away from doing this. But, God has a...sense of humor," continued the trained tank gunner with a laugh. "I have to say, though, that everything happens for a reason. I was so burned out on doing this job, but now that I'm out here, I'm actually having fun."

Sheble has a similar background.

"I was actually a general contractor before I came in the military," he said. "That's why I was chosen to do this."

These two, with their years of experience, have taken two newer, younger soldiers under their wing in the practice of creating random woodworks and works of art.

"We had two first sergeants from two different battalions loan us two other guys," said Sheble. "We've got Spc. Royce McCoy and Spc. Mark Wilkins. They knew very little about all this stuff when we started training them. They've really picked up the ball. Without them, we wouldn't be getting anything done."

Though this is a tasked job, unit pride provides both Sheble and Boyce the motivation to keep going.

"The pride is just in doing," Boyce said.

Sheble agreed.

"I'm proud of 1-25," he said. "To us, this is more than just throwing some red, white and blue up on a wall."

Operation Gimlet Voice

Story and Photo provided by
1st Lt. Mike Thomas
Company A, 3-21

The people of Iraq were able to execute their right as a free and democratic country by casting votes to elect their leadership, January 31.

The Iraqi people were ensured the freedom to cast their vote not by luck but by a great many hours of dedicated planning coupled with precise execution by Coalition forces and Iraqi Security Forces in the Apache area of operation during Operation Gimlet Voice.

For the local citizen, election day meant waking up, braving possible polling site attacks and ensuring their voice was heard by casting a vote for their leadership of choice; but for Iraqi and Coalition forces, Election Day would mean more.

For the Soldiers of Apache Company, 3rd Battalion 21st Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryk-

er Brigade, 25th Infantry Division election day meant planning that would begin weeks before January 31.

Prior to the election, platoons were partnering with their Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police counterparts in order to enhance ISF ability to conduct tasks such as searching individuals and check point operations.

Lieutenant Kelly of 3rd Platoon noted that even though his men were teaching the IA and IP the basics of vehicle searches and personnel searches, they were improving themselves in the process.

Apache leadership also spent many hours reviewing and refining the plans that their Iraqi counterparts were ready to emplace. In the Apache area of operations, the general consensus was that, undoubtedly due to past Coalition training, the plans were very thorough and built to succeed with minimal improvements needed.

This election was significant in that ISF would be responsi-

ble for the security of the polling sites throughout Iraq while Coalition forces would provide over watch from a distance.

With ISF in the forefront the Apaches were not only able to validate the Government of Iraq's ability to secure its own people, but more importantly, were able to gauge their counterparts and their ability to conduct security operations.

Overall, things went well. At the polling sites in AO Apache, the IA generally took the outer cordon while the IP were responsible for the inner cordon. There were no significant acts to report throughout the day and though some were turned away for attempting to vote in the wrong station, voters were generally pleased with the process. In Apache AO, the stations were closed by 6:00 p.m.. Once the announcement was made that the polls were closed, Apache Company visited each site to ensure that proper breakdown of barriers and wire was conducted. Following the inspection, all elements returned to base.

What the Apaches of TF 3-21 wanted was a secure election with no attacks and an ISF that had further validated itself in the eyes of the local civilians. With hard work and dedicated planning from Alpha Company, Operation Gimlet Voice was a success.

On election day, Spc. Griever and his platoon, 3rd Platoon, Apache Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment link up with Iraqi Army at the outer cordon in order to assess the security situation.



United States Air Force:

Bringing the Boom

Story by Pfc. Alisha Nye
Photo by Spc. Opal Vaughn
14th Public Affairs Detachment

Most people think that all Airmen do is fly airplanes. Most people are wrong.

While the United States Air Force does use aircraft to supplement and defend U.S. Forces on ground in combat zones, it takes a considerable amount of ground coordination to organize a successful air strike – to drop a bomb from an aircraft onto a selected ground target.

This organization is provided by Airmen such as Staff Sgt. Andrew Carpenter, joint terminal attack controller, 5th Air Support Operations Squadron, attached to 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

“The biggest factor for us, our main focus, is making sure that all the friendly forces are out of harm’s way so we don’t have an incident of fratricide,” said Carpenter.

Ultimately, it is a communications specialist who corresponds with troops on ground who runs the show. This specialist will get a grid coordinate for the target on ground once the locations of all ground forces has been established, said Carpenter.

“It has to be very precise,” Carpenter said.

After establishing a grid coordinate with the pilots of the aircraft and all further information regarding a bomb drop onto a selected ground target is passed on, that’s when the communications specialist will enter into an actual control procedure with the pilots.

“We try to talk the pilots’ eyes onto the target so they can see what

Pvt. 1st Class Lukas Couvaras, an infantryman with 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division looks on from a distance at the results of a Joint Direct Attack Munitions demolishing a school in Amugaten, Iraq, Feb. 7. The school was a known house-born improvised explosive carrier and was destroyed as part of a joint mission called Operation Automatic Pursuit II, lead by U.S. Forces and 3rd and 4th Battalion, 18th Brigade, Iraqi Army.

we’re talking about,” Carpenter said. “From there, we have to work out what direction they will be flying in from. If, for whatever reason, a bomb falls short or long, it could cause fratricide. So, we try not to have them flying in toward friendly people. We have them fly parallel to friendly forces.”

The success of all of these factors determines the success of the drop, said Carpenter. If all information is communicated properly, an air strike is extremely successful, but the job isn’t always easy.

“It gets pretty hairy sometimes,” Carpenter said. “But we’re very good at what we do.”

Communication, said Carpenter, is the key to success.

“Our main job is knowing how to use a radio,” he said.

Along with coordinating air assault missions, 2-8 FA’s Air Force brethren work with a myriad of aircraft in order to support the ground missions of 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

“We’ve got a jamming aircraft that we can use to jam signals from anything from cell phones,



to remote controlled improvised explosive devices,” Carpenter said. “We can work with unmanned aerial vehicles to do some intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.”

The most difficult part about this highly coordinated job? Sitting in a tactical operations center, said Carpenter.

“Three years ago and when I came in 2003, we were very much going outside the wire, going out with companies and doing operations on a daily basis,” he said. “Technology has kind of hampered us. People might think it’s easy because I can do everything I need to do from the TOC, but I would much rather be out there, boots on ground, with the guys and doing my job.”

Though the way he operates during deployment is different now than it was before, Carpenter would not trade doing this job, or he’s doing this job with, for anything.

“I like my job and I love working with 2-8,” he said. “They’re the best battalion I’ve worked with in six and a half years of doing this job.”

Operation Le

Story and photos by
Spc. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD

Before the sun rose the morning of March 26, Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment were already on the move, heading for the villages of Abu Bakr and Abu Awad.

The Soldiers, commanded by Capt. Matthew D. Mackey, were beginning Operation Legion Pursuit II.

The top three key tasks of Legion Pursuit II were to project

and sustain Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces in the area, conduct a detailed census of the towns and to provide humanitarian assistance in order to bolster ISF and local national relations, said Mackey.

“To accomplish the first task is to project ISF and Coalition Forces combat power in the sector; go out there with the people and stay out there for an extended period of time,” said Mackey.

The force projection was intended to be provided by combat air support and the large amount of ISF and Coalition forces. However,

once at the village of Abu Bakr, the Soldiers noticed the target area was now covered by farmland that they didn’t want to destroy; after a short deliberation the air strike was called off and artillery fire was coordinated, firing into an unused area of the river valley.

In order to complete the census, Coalition Forces and Iraqi Army Soldiers moved from house to house using satellite images that labeled each building in the two villages. Overall, approximately 422 buildings were searched. Included in that number were houses, animal pens and



Sgt. Justin Cash, a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division provides security for an Iraqi Army Soldier as he searches a house during Operation Legion Pursuit II, March 26th.

Operation Pursuit II

other standing structures.

“As a squad leader, I would greet the village people, ask them their concerns, comments, if they’re getting enough food and where they’re getting their water from,” said Staff. Sgt. Ian H. Martinez. “From there I would write down their personal information; who was the head of the household, how many males or females lived there and how many children were there.”

Early in the first day of the operation the villagers were curious when the Soldiers began moving from house to house, but by midday and into the second day word had passed about the ISF and Coalitions Forces intentions in the area and the villagers began to open up to Soldiers from both forces.

“They have seen us patrolling before, but usually we (were) doing a quick pass,” said Mackey. “I saw no hostility; once they understood why we were there they were very open and supportive. One woman said she was very happy we were working with the IA and she hoped that someday the IA could be at the level of Coalition Forces, which I think they are getting there.”

While maintaining security, the Iraqi and Coalition Soldiers were very personable and respectful; many of the noncommissioned officers have deployed before and understand the culture, said Mackey.

After clearing both villages and the wadi’s, deep canyons



Iraqi Army and Coalition Soldiers speak with a local national during the census phase of Operation Legion Pursuit II, March 26th.

caused by erosion leading to the river valley, the IA dropped off food supplies in the villages.

Preliminary results of the operation show 422 homes or structures were searched,

150 families were entered into the census, 26 caves were cleared and reduced and four weapons caches were located and exploited.

History Made in First Joint Iraqi-Co

Story and photos by
Sgt. Jeremy Pitcher
145th MPAD

History was made as the first joint U.S. and Iraqi Army Non-Commissioned Officer ceremony was held at Forward Operating Base Faylok in Diyala province on March 27. Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division joined with Soldiers of the 20th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division to officially

induct their newest members into the NCO Corps.

Of the 27 Soldiers that were inducted in the ceremony, 18 were members of the 3-21 Inf. and 9 were members of the 20th IA Brigade.

Though the ceremony is not required for Soldiers who become NCOs the ceremony is seen as a time-honored tradition that displays the pride and respect Soldiers have for the Corps.

"It is a great honor. I know when I came up as a Sergeant, this was pretty much the tradition and the

norm, but due to all of the deployments it has kind of went away. So it is good to see it come back and to see the Soldiers get to participate," said First Sgt. Richard Beaver of 3-21 Inf. The ceremony began with the playing of the U.S. and Iraqi national anthems symbolizing the bond the two groups have created with each other.

"We have united over the last few years. Last deployment we didn't joke around or talk to them [Iraqi Army] very much but now we interact with them quite a

Iraqi Soldiers stand at attention after reciting the Iraqi Army Non-Commissioned Officer's creed on March 27. The joint ceremony is a testament to the partnership that has been formed by Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces. The historical event is hoped to be just the first of many more in the future.



Coalition NCO Induction Ceremony



American Soldiers raise their right hands while reciting the Non-Commissioned Officer's creed on March 27. The first joint induction ceremony included 18 Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division and 9 Soldiers from 20th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division.

bit," said Sgt. Melvin Gibson, an NCO inductee with the 3-21 Inf.

During the ceremony the Soldiers from each respective nation stood and recited their service's NCO creed. Each creed was then interpreted to the others language so all could acknowledge the creed being recited.

The guest speaker for the ceremony was Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Austin of the 25th Brigade Support Battalion, 1/25th SBCT who spoke on what it means to be a leader and NCO in the military.

"It was an honor for me to be chosen as the guest speaker to be able to give a message to the young leaders; our future leaders of tomorrow," said Austin.

After Austin spoke, four senior U.S. NCOs along with one Iraqi NCO entered and lit four separate candles signifying the core principles of the military and its forever endurance.

The Soldiers then walked through an archway and over a small wooden bridge on the event's stage to signify their passage into the NCO Corps.

"This is something I'll

always remember; the biggest reason is because of the IA. It just shows that every day we are getting closer to the Iraqi people and the Iraqi Army," said NCO inductee Sgt. Jessie Calvillo, Company C, 3-21 Inf.

After the ceremony closed the new inductees lined up and were greeted with smiles and handshakes from their fellow Soldiers from both the U.S. and Iraq. The historical event was a defining mark in the relationship between the two nations, once enemies, now comrades, in the struggle to bring peace to a nation.

On the PROWL



Spc. Ryan Saunders, 73rd Engineers:

"Akon and T.I. because of the way the music is. It's comfortable, relaxing and nice."



Sgt. Evarardo Esquivel, 25th ID PSO:

"Paul Brandon or any techno because it wakes me up in the morning."

"Who is your favorite musical artist to relax to?"



Private 1st Class Michael Timmons, 287th Military Police, 89th Brigade:

"The Used because I love the sound of the music and voices."



Spc. Perry Olsen, Company C, 1-5:

"Nirvana, I have no idea, I just like the guitars, it's pretty chill."

Spc. Jay Williams, Company C, 1-5:

"Ten Years because they have a lot of soothing rhythm."



Spc. Loni Benau, Company A, 448 Civil Affairs:

"Jay Holiday because he is the bomb!"

Pvt. Joshua Holladay, Company C, 1-5:

"Jack Johnson; it's chill music."

Iraqi Army, 3-66 Armor work together to clear villages

Story by Spc. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD

Company A, 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, working in cooperation with the Iraqi Army recently took part in an operation to clear out the insurgent threat in several villages in southern Diyala Province.

"What we were doing was assisting the Iraqi Army in the clearing and now holding of villages in the southern Balad Ruz area of Diyala Province," said Capt. Daniel Godbey, commander, Company A.

The villages included in the operation were Tawhilla, Tamuz and Shanana. Godbey said the IA and his Soldiers would

clear and hold a village one at a time; each village taking about three days to complete.

Company A assisted the IA in both planning their operation while providing security for the IA. Company A also assisted the IA by providing guidance on anything they needed.

"They actually did very well on all phases of the operation," said Godbey. "We would walk, dismounted, through the village. The Iraqi Army would stop at each house, talk to the people in the house and conduct an initial census and survey of living conditions."

After ensuring no explosives or hazardous materials were in the area, the IA would emplace out-posts around the vil-

lages to make sure no other insurgent elements entered the area.

1st Lt. Javier Avila, a platoon leader with Company A, said his platoon was used quiet a bit to provide security when the IA moved from house to house.

"The IA were very professional and they seemed to grasp the concept of the way it should be done," said Avila. "They are very thorough in their operation."

Godbey said the operation went very smoothly and he felt his Soldiers were along for the ride as opposed to having to lead the way.

"The IA unit we were with was very professional and did their job very well," said Godbey. "They knew what they were doing."

Married Couple takes command of units the same day

Story by Spc. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD

Two units of the Brigade Troops Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division conducted change of command ceremonies at FOB Warhorse, April 1.

The ceremonies, a long standing tradition in the Army, came with a slight twist; both incoming commanders are married to each other. Capts. Dervan H. Taaffe-McMenamy and Damian R. Taaffe-McMenamy took command of units within hours of each other.

Dervan H. Taaffe-McMenamy now commands the 184th Military Intelligence Company, BTB, 1-25 SBCT, replacing outgoing commander, Capt. Ryan M. DeBonis.

Her husband, Damian Taaffe-McMenamy took charge of Delta

Troop, 5th Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry, BTB, 1-25th SBCT, as Maj. Phillip G. Mann is leaving the Stryker Brigade to attend Intermediate Level Education at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

"Command is a position of trust," said Damian Taaffe-McMenamy, addressing his new Soldiers. "You can trust that I will bring all my energy, passion and enthusiasm to the job."

Lt. Col. Brian D. Slack, Brigade Troops Battalion commander, said when it comes to selection for company level command, ultimately it is the decision of the brigade commander.

As a battalion commander Slack provided input to the brigade commander for all of the military intelligence captains that were under consideration for command.

"After looking at each of the candidate's past experiences and qualifications, as well as soliciting feedback from those in the

military intelligence community, both Captains Taaffe-McMenamy were my top two choices for command," said Slack. "The fact that they happen to be husband and wife was never factored into my selection process and is more of a novelty than anything else. Each will approach their respective commands with the same zeal that any new commander would."



Capt's Taffe-McMenamy hug after Dervan Taffe-McMenamy took command of the 184th Military Intelligence Company.

Staying Arctic Tough



Soldiers of the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team receive the oath of enlistment from Brig. Gen. James Nixon at FOB Warhorse, March 16.

Story and Photos by
Spc. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD

Soldiers of the 1st Stryker Brigade, 25th Infantry Division received special recognition from Brig. Gen. James Nixon, Deputy Commanding General – Operations, 25th Infantry Division, during a mass reenlistment and coining ceremony, March 16.

Nixon delivered the oath of enlistment to seven Soldiers from multiple units in the Brigade and thanked them for their service.

Staff Sgt. Matthew Cloud said reenlisting as a non-commissioned-officer he wanted to show his Soldiers that no matter what it's a good time to stay in the military.

"It gives them a little insight on why I'm staying in and hopefully

to get some of these good guys to stay in the Army instead of getting out and coming back later," said Cloud.

Spc. Adam Steele said he is reenlisting to stay in Alaska. "I love that state," said Steele.

Five Soldiers of 1-25 SBCT's Brigade Support Battalion also reenlisted, receiving their oath from Lt. Col. Michael C. Snyder, 25th BSB Commander.

Also being recognized during the ceremony was Staff Sgt. Steven Schack, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-25. Schack received an Army Commendation Medal for his work as Multi-National Corps – Iraq's Career Counselor of the year for fiscal year 2008.

"Being a career counselor entails talking to Soldiers about anything to advance their military careers," said Schack "It was

a good accomplishment. I was happy; I prepared a lot for it and had a lot of people's help. When I was selected it was a good feeling."



Lt. Col Michael C. Snyder, commander, 25th Brigade Support Battalion, swears in several soldiers of the BSB prior to Brig. Gen. James Nixon's arrival.

Improvise, Adapt and Overcome: Recon!

Story and Photos Provided By
1st Lt. Adam Redden
2-8 Field Artillery

Over the course of March, the Recon Platoon of 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, has been actively targeting Al Qaeda in Iraq forces in the Automatic area of operations.

Recon has conducted numerous reconnaissance and surveillance missions in order to track the enemy and remove them from the area.

Despite having their most senior member, Sgt. 1st Class Landrum, on leave for the month of February, and a recent change with Lt. Redden taking over for Lt. Galloway as the Platoon leader, the Platoon continued to set and exceed the standard.

This has all been with Soldiers from a diverse range of military occupational specialties, such as generator mechanics, fire direction specialists, and medics.

The Soldiers have fully embraced their new roles as "infantry scouts" and love what they are doing, even if it is not what they enlisted to do.

The platoon has been responsible for finding dozens of weapons caches and recently took part in Operation Automatic Pursuit II. As the action arm for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2-8, the platoon has operated primarily to support Archangel Battery which only has one maneuver platoon due to their requirement to maintain a firing platoon.

Recon partners on a daily basis with the Scout Platoon of the 18th Iraqi Army Brigade. Working with their IA counterparts has exponentially increased Recon's ability to conduct its primary mission of finding and hunting the enemy.

The Soldiers of the IA BDE are very knowledgeable in their skills and have an excellent working relationship with all the members of Recon Platoon.

Recently, Recon completed a three-day reconnaissance mission in order to identify individuals who were firing into a village and then escaping.

Every day Recon moves out to conduct any number of essential missions for the battalion and every day is always different from the day prior.

One day we are out occupying an observation post looking for enemy activity and the next day



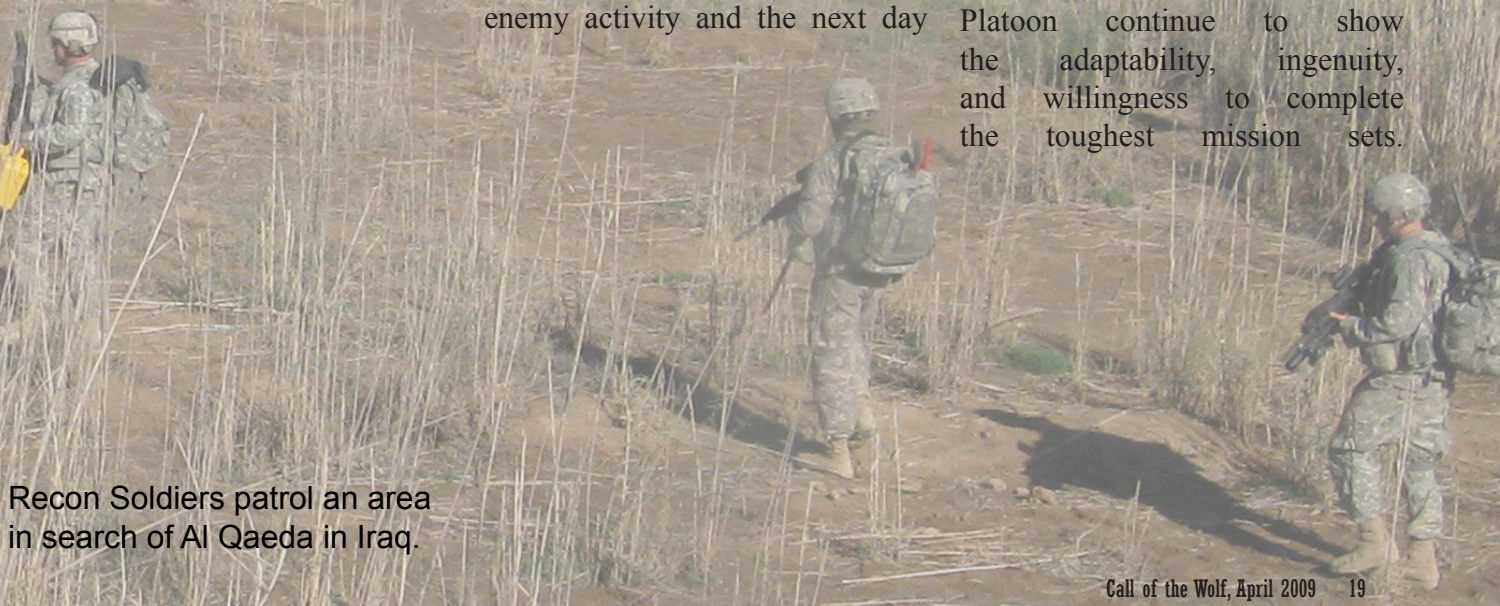
Soldiers of Recon Platoon are greeted by children during a recent mission

we are escorting human collection team to conduct an intelligence interview with local leadership.

The good thing about Recon is that we are not limited to our area of operations. We can go wherever the battalion needs us to collect intelligence on the enemy. This allows us the ability to be fluid throughout the battle space and go where the enemy goes.

The amount of hard work and dedication that these young men have shown is awe inspiring.

The young soldiers of Recon Platoon continue to show the adaptability, ingenuity, and willingness to complete the toughest mission sets.



Recon Soldiers patrol an area in search of Al Qaeda in Iraq.



Lt. Col. Brian Reed, commander, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division discusses the conditions of a contract with a local national to complete the opening of a water purification facility located in Shekhy, Iraq, Mar. 9.

Breaking ground for better water

Story and Photos by
Spc. Opal Vaughn
14th Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division recently conducted a groundbreaking ceremony for improvements to a water treatment facility in Iraq's Diyala province on March 9.

The planned improvements for this water purification facility, located in the town of Shekhy, are just one example of the multiple humanitar-

ian support and assistance projects planned and coordinated by 1-24 Inf. soldiers..

"We want to make it better than what it was when we got here," said Capt. Charles Molnar, civil military operations project manager, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. "We came here originally in 2003 against Saddam's army, now that we're here, we're helping to rebuild, reestablish and hopefully provide a better life for the people of Iraq."

Soldiers are now working jointly with Iraqi Security For-

ces to ensure structures in the Diyala province of Iraq are up to standard and in working order.

"We do a combination of projects. This project here... it has the possibility to provide water to four different villages for the first time in a few years. Leading up to this operation, we have worked on the VOTEC school in Khalis, a school in Quba, two schools Abulgarma, Al Khatun canal cleaning and we reopened Al Zuhariat date factory," Molnar stated.

"These schools were primarily located in Sunni populated areas, which have been through a lot of AQI fighting, about a

year or so ago; just like the school we just left which is now in rubble,” said Lt. Col. Brian Reed, commander, 1-24 Inf. “So this is part of our targeting program in our AO to refurbish some of the facilities in order to promote education and create a better learning environment.”

Regardless of the circumstances, Reed believes the people of Iraq must move forward.

“School will go on even if it’s in a less inadequate building,” Reed said. “But the water project we’re doing now is a big one. Water is a problem throughout this area as well as other areas. Getting the water distributed – what this project will allow us to do is pull water from the canal, filter and to distribute it to more towns because right now it’s not a functioning site.

Most of the people are getting their water from bottled water sources or illegal tapping.”

Because America cares, Soldiers fight.

Soldiers used to fight with fists drawn and guns blazing. But now, like Soldiers with 1-24Inf., U.S. forces also fight with good deeds put into action.

“We care because it’s part of the overall plan to allow the government of Iraq to take care of its people. If we can help them with some of the smaller tasking like stabilizing the government, then the government of Iraq will be able to protect and provide for their people. So these projects obviously are jointly worked on but they are run and operated by an Iraqi face,” said Reed.

Background photo:

A water purification facility located in Shekhy, Iraq, Mar. 9. Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division are working jointly with local nationals in Shekhy to repair the facility.

Lt. Col. Brian Reed, commander, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division cuts a ribbon with the Headmaster of the Abulkhteb primary school, located in the Diyala province of Iraq, officially opening the school, Mar. 9.



Chaplain's Corner

Stay Strong:

The Three Ambushes

A few years ago, I was talking to the CEO of a Fortune 1000 company. He was a man who grew up in total poverty in a developing nation and was now a multi-millionaire. I asked him, "What is the single most influential factor in your life." He replied, "A man named Bobby Clinton became a mentor to me when I was young and very poor. He had a profound impact on my life."

His statement immediately captured my attention. Dr. Bobby Clinton is a Professor of Leadership Studies and I had studied many of his writings in Graduate School. One of the prevailing themes in Dr. Clinton's works is the ability of some leaders to *finish well* or *finish strong*. In his research, he demonstrates how leaders who finish strong usually have a profound impact on society, regardless of their level of leadership.

Research also shows that those in leadership who do not finish strong are more often than not, those who experience major moral failures during their leadership tenure. Leaders have been experiencing significant failures since biblical times. In fact, it is estimated that less than one out of ten leaders in the Bible actually finished strong.

In his book, "*Finishing Strong*", Steve Farrar's research illustrates the three most-likely ambushes that lead to moral failure among leaders. He lists them as follows:

1. The ambush of another man or woman
2. The ambush of money or

lack of ethics

3. The ambush of a neglected family

In one of his studies, Dr. Howard Hendricks studied 246 men who experienced major moral failure in a two year period. Amazingly, 100% of those men "without exception had been convinced that moral failure would never happen to them."

As athletes in high school or college, we learned that the best defense is a good offense. As soldiers, we have learned how important it is to anticipate an attack, remain on the offensive, and never be surprised or blind-sided.

Do you believe that none of these ambushes will happen to you? If so, it's possible that you're on the *Ten Most Vulnerable List*. General George Patton once said, "Untutored courage is useless in the face of educated bullets." It is amazing to see how some are willing to charge into tomorrow with untutored courage while exposing themselves to ambushes that have the potential to do much damage.

I encourage people to develop an ambush checklist. Introspectively ask yourself the following questions:

1. Am I spending too much time with or becoming emotionally attached to someone other than my spouse?
2. Do I cut ethical corners? (Large ethical blunders always start with small ones.)
3. Am I so focused on activities outside my home that I am not focused on my family? If the answer is no, does my spouse or do my children agree? If they disagree, there is a high likelihood that you are neglecting your family and possibly in serious denial. [While we are deployed, many Soldiers find innovative



Chaplain (Maj.) Roderick Mills

ways to spend "time" with their families through phone calls, internet video calls, letters, emails, Facebook, sending gifts and cards, etc.]

Hopefully, these thoughts will give us a tactical advantage over the three ambushes. There are three things we can do.

1. Think about the three questions, taking inventory of our actions and lifestyle.
2. Discuss them with your spouse (or friends if you're unmarried).
3. Conduct a frequent examination of these three areas of our lives.

If we take these actions, we can protect ourselves from being blind-sided by the ambushes that come upon many. The words of Saint Paul come to mind. "Beware when you think you stand, lest you fall." As we take this warning to heart, let us pray always for God's protection and blessing that we may *finish strong* and completely fulfill our God-given destiny.

All Gave Some



Some Gave All



CPL Michael Mayne
A Company, 5-1 CAV
Born Oct. 9 1987
Killed in Action Feb. 23 2009



CPL Micheal Alleman
A Company, 5-1 CAV
Born Jan. 19 1978
Killed in Action Feb. 23 2009



CPL Zachary Nordmeyer
A Company, 5-1 CAV
Born Aug. 5 1987
Killed in Action Feb. 23 2009



SPC Israel Candelaria Mejias
A Company 1-2 INF, 3-66 AR
Born Feb. 26 1981
Killed in Action April. 5 2009

Fallen Wolves

SPC Heath Pickard, C Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 18 Sept 1987 - 16 Oct 2008

PFC Cody Eggleston, C Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 17 Sept 1987 - 24 Oct 2008

CPL Michael Mayne, A Company, 5th Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 9 Oct 1987 - 23 Feb 2009

CPL Micheal Alleman, A Company, 5th Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 19 Jan 1978 - 23 Feb 2009

CPL Zachary Nordmeyer, A Company, 5th Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 5 Aug 1987 - 23 Feb 2009

SPC Israel Candelaria Mejias, A Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 26 Feb 1981 - 5 April 2009

Military Working Dog, Jok, Brigade Troops Battalion, 14 Nov 2008

Call of the Wolf, April 2009 23

A large, detailed image of a wolf's head and neck, shown in profile, howling upwards. The wolf has thick, light-colored fur. The background is a soft, light blue sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

The Arctic Warrior March

We conquer the mountains and the valleys!

We train in the winter's bitter cold!

Alaska Soldiers! Arctic Warriors!

Sentries of the North!

So pick up your weapons and your snowshoes!

We're ready to fight and to defend!

The finest Soldiers! Arctic Warriors! From the last Frontier!

The Wolf Creed

Strike fear in the enemy's hearts and minds;
I am a lethal and skilled warfighter with unmatched intestinal fortitude.

Being a disciplined, professional Soldier, I live the Army Values.

Committed to my fellow Soldiers, unit and country, I am ready to answer my nation's call -- NOW!

Tough, both physically and mentally, and instilled with warrior spirit, I can accomplish my mission. Anytime. Anywhere.

Arctic Wolves!

Arctic Tough!