



Lightning Weekly



PAGE 1

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STORY and PHOTO BY
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FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq – Nine Iraqi police in Kirkuk city received U.S. Army Achievement Medals, awarded by 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, May 14, at two IP stations in the city.

The first five awards went to IP who maintain safety of the city through effective patrolling.

Lt. Col. Terry Cook, the commander of 3rd Bn., 82nd FA Regt., said it's vital that the IP continue to work hard since insurgent activity within the city still exists. He cited the case of a suicide bombers attempted attack at a local mosque thwarted by IPs.

The awardees are working to set an example for other members of the Kirkuk police, and they are teaching themselves and us what it means to serve tirelessly, said Cook.

"They do this and they serve without asking to be recognized," Cook explained. "These medals are our way of saying thank you, not just for what you do for the city of Kirkuk, but also for helping U.S. military forces who work in the city as well."

The commander of the police within Kirkuk province, Maj. Gen. Jamal Tahir Bakir, had a few things to say about these particular IP.

"I am very proud of everyone, especially these five," Jamal said. "Not just for what they are doing daily, but also for what they have sacrificed for their city."

"I hope and believe that other IP are going to follow these five as an example for how to serve and protect the city," he continued.

Jamal also took the chance to elaborate on how his policemen are responding to the insurgency within the city.

"Terrorists who try to hurt us do not affect our morale," he explained. "Our morale comes from doing our best to fight these insurgents, and we will not hesitate to sacrifice ourselves for our service and our country."

With the support of various police and military agencies around the province, we

Strengthening Bonds With Medals, Soccer



Lt. Col. Terry Cook (right), commander, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, faces off against an Iraqi police officer during a soccer match at an IP station in Kirkuk City, Iraq, May 14. The U.S. team lost 5-4, but both sides left the field with smiles on their faces.

will defeat terrorism in Kirkuk, stated Jamal.

For the IP that received the awards, the event was a rare opportunity.

"I volunteered to be an IP so I could serve my country," said Sgt. Rafeeq Qadir Khidir, a policeman in Kirkuk city. "We are doing our best and it is great that we are being appreciated."

After finishing the first award ceremony, Soldiers from 3rd Bn., 82nd FA Regt. moved to another station, where IP from the vehicle maintenance section were recognized.

"You work extremely hard, but you barely get recognized," Cook told the four maintenance police officers. "You make it happen behind the scenes."

Cook said police missions could not get accomplished within the city without the work of the police who maintain the vehicles.

"It is important to recognize anyone that is doing a good job," Cook continued. "We let them know 'hey, you guys aren't going unnoticed.'"

Following the presentation of the awards, Soldiers from 3rd Bn., 82nd FA Regt. were treated to a friendly soccer match against their police counterparts.

"It was a great game," explained 1st Lt. Danema Fatha Zaneel, a maintenance officer at the station. "It is great that U.S. military forces could reward these policemen, and also make time to play soccer with us."

Although the Soldiers lost to the policemen 5-4, it was still a relationship building experience on both sides.

"We are building camaraderie and relationships, and it is great that we get to get out and have fun together," said Capt. Stephen Clark, the information officer for 3rd Bn., 82nd FA Regt.

After the match, the Soldiers returned to Forward Operating Base Warrior and the IP continued on with their work in the city, nine with a shiny new medal in their pockets, and more with a victory on the soccer field fresh in their minds.

U.S. and Iraqi Partners Share Recognition



Lt. Col. Terry Cook, commander, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, pins a U.S. Army Achievement Medal to the uniform of an Iraqi Emergency Services Unit policeman, at the ESU Station in Kirkuk City, May 11.

STORY and PHOTO BY

Pfc. Justin Naylor
2nd HBCT, 1st CAV Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

Partnership is the term used by U.S. military officials to describe the cooperative relationship between Iraqi police, Iraqi Army Soldiers and U.S. Soldiers following the Security Agreement signed between the two countries, Jan. 1. This includes daily missions maintaining security in Kirkuk province and it also means sharing in accomplishments.

Iraqi emergency services police in Kirkuk City, Iraq, were witness to a reenlistment ceremony for two Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, "Red Dragons," 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, May 11, which included awarding Army Achievement Medals to five of their own Shurta, or policemen, from their "Red Dragon" partners, at the Emergency Services Unit station.

The ceremony began with dozens of ESU Shurta standing in formation to watch the unfurling of the U.S. flag and the

Reenlistment of Sgt. David Crebo, a Farmington, N.M., native and Spc. Jonathan Real, a Bayamon, Puerto Rico, native, both artillerymen with Battery B, 3rd Bn., 82nd FA Regt.

"There is nothing more fitting than for these Soldiers to raise their right hand and reenlist with their Iraqi partners present," explained Lt. Col. Terry Cook, the commander of the 3rd Bn., 82nd FA Regt.

Aside from wanting to extend their time in the military, there were additional reasons they chose to reenlist with their Iraqi partners beside them.

"We are in their country," said Real. "We wanted to show them how we do our ceremonies."

Crebo explained that the ESU had been a great partner and this ceremony symbolized that partnership between the ESU and the U.S. Army, and it also gave the Shurta an example of how to conduct their own reenlistment ceremonies.

Following the reenlistment, the five Shurta receiving AAMs were brought before the assembled Iraqi police and U.S. Soldiers. By Army regulation, the AAM can be

awarded to any member of the Armed Forces of the United States, or to any member of the Armed Forces of a friendly foreign nation, who, while serving in any capacity with the Army, distinguishes himself by meritorious service or achievement.

According to Brig. Gen. Khatad, the ESU chief, the five Shurta were being rewarded for their outstanding work and for setting an example for their fellow policemen.

"I've seen the Shurta within Kirkuk city working at an exceptional level," said Cook. "We are honored and humbled to be able to serve with such a fine organization."

For one Shurta in particular, the award had special meaning.

"It is very unusual for us to receive awards for doing our job well," explained Anies Fandi Naijm Muter, an ESU Shurta. "I am very proud."

"All my fellow Shurtas are going to try and prove that they can be better than me now," said Muter. "It's a great program, and it is great that we are being rewarded for doing what we love."

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A Soldier with 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division demonstrates to an Iraqi child how to properly take a knee on April 23 during Operation Warhorse Scimitar in west Mosul. The child was running up and down this alley way giving high-fives to Soldiers.

Iraqi National Police, Warhorse Battalion Knock on Old Town's Doors

STORY and PHOTO BY

Pfc. Jared Sollars

145th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MOSUL, Iraq – Insurgents thought they'd found a haven in Old Town, a neighborhood on the west side of Mosul, and the city's oldest area, but on April 15 the Mosul Iraqi national police brigade and 3rd "Warhorse" Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division joined forces and kicked off an operation to sweep, clear and census in this area.

Operation Warhorse Scimitar brought the Iraqi national police and Warhorse Battalion together to clear and conduct census of Old Town, denying insurgents and criminals from using it as a bed down area and meeting location.

"Operation Warhorse Scimitar was conducted jointly with Iraqi security forces on the west side of Mosul and what we have done not only for this mission, but for the last several months is we have embedded in the Iraqi security force formations and conducted clearing operations throughout the periphery of what is called west Mosul," said Warhorse Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Thomas Cipolla.

The densely populated area of Old Town has seen little security force presence in the past, opening the door for insurgents to operate in and around the region. In planning this operation, one of the highlighted goals was to root out insurgent and criminal activity and establish a permanent presence of security throughout the neighborhoods. This operation lasted 15 days and spanned four of the six distinct neighborhoods in Old Town.

"Old Town is the older part of Mosul. It's densely populated. The streets aren't nearly as well developed as other areas in Mosul. The infrastructure is much more underdeveloped as opposed to the rest of Mosul," said Cpt. Jeffrey Hendrix, the commander of B Co., 3rd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt. "And we were responsible for supporting the Mosul national police brigade as they cleared four of the neighborhoods in Old Town."

The coalition and Iraqi security forces traversed the narrow alleyways and streets together, clearing 5,780 buildings in four neighborhoods and detaining seven individuals suspected of terrorist activities.

The census conducted during the operation determined who lives and works in the neighborhoods, what insurgents were using the neighborhood, where they were working in the neighborhood and what their plans were.

"We were there getting the intel, seeing who lives in this area, who operates this area, who from this area is doing X, Y and Z," said Staff Sgt. John V. Nightingale, the platoon sergeant for B Co.'s 3rd Platoon.

The Mosul Bde. conducted a majority of the census and clearing of the neighborhoods, while Warhorse Battalion provided perimeter security. This handshaking has allowed coalition forces to swap trade secrets with the ISF to help them become more successful in securing their own communities.

"We're actually doing some good with the national police. They're catching onto our actions, how we clear houses, how we walk in formation, why we stagger trucks and how we act toward the Iraqi civilians we

encounter, they're really starting to catch on," said Nightingale.

The operation as a whole has played a critical role toward the combined efforts to deny sanctuary to insurgent networks that would likely utilize the area for their own operations and a newly established security presence is beginning to reap rewards.

"We are getting a lot of positive feedback from the neighborhoods about the operation," said Hendrix. "We've had a large decrease in significant activities in these neighborhoods. We are working with local police to continue patrols in these areas and that has been successful. I think that the impact and effect we wanted, we are starting to see."

Six neighborhoods are expected to be cleared by the end of this operation. Neighborhoods such as Baghdad Garage, Bab Al Beeth, Bab Al Jadeed and Bab Al Toob, all in west Mosul, will begin to see relative peace and the start of reconstruction and commerce as this operation winds down and ISF establish a consistent presence here.

Cipolla said, "As we came into Mosul we saw a lot of areas that were completely demoralized and not living under normal conditions by any stretch of the imagination. Now we are starting to see areas where we have gained security footholds start to blossom and start to flourish."

"There are businesses that are opening back up. There are projects that are happening in these areas," he said. "We view the Old Town area as the most challenging area but one of the areas that has the most potential for growth as well."

Iraqi Police Prove Ready to Assume Security Responsibility During Validation Ceremony



Maj. Thomas Losik, executive officer, 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division and an Iraqi policeman hold a plaque which symbolizes Tikrit policemen's ability to operate as an independent force during the first district validation ceremony for Iraqi policemen at the Tikrit District Headquarters, May 19. Tikrit is the first district in Salah ad-Din province to become validated to operate independently.



A group of girls from the Tikrit Orphanage sung songs of ending war, establishing friendship and peace during the first district validation ceremony for Iraqi Policemen at the Tikrit District Headquarters, May 19.



Staff Maj. Gen. Hamid, provincial chief of police, snips a ribbon in front of the Tikrit District Headquarters that symbolized Tikrit's ability to operate as an independent force during the validation ceremony at the Tikrit District Headquarters, May 19. Tikrit is the first district in Salah ad-Din province to become validated to operate independently.

STORY and PHOTOS BY
Spc. Jazz Burney
3rd IBCT, 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE
SPEICHER, TIKRIT, Iraq – The melody of a group of Tikrit Orphanage girls singing songs of ending war, establishing friendship and peace created a glimpse of hope for the future of Iraq during Salah ad-Din province's first district validation ceremony where policemen received complete authority to serve and protect the district, May 19.

Nine local Iraqi police stations of the Tikrit District received validation establishing independence from the 342nd Military Police Company, who was responsible for advising the IPs on the security of the district.

"Today is one of the great days in Iraq because of the validation ceremony for Tikrit headquarters' policemen who receive security and responsibility from coalition forces – this is a great and important step for

the Iraqi police and the people of the province," said Col. Emad, chief of Tikrit District police.

Senior leaders from both coalition forces and local government celebrated the district IP's ability to function solely on their own.

The validation process is based on an Iraqi police station's ability to conduct operations effectively and confirms that the station would not require coalition forces presence. "Since early January we arrived in Tikrit and have been working alongside the local and district Iraqi policemen as partners through everyday operations," said Capt. John Shipe, company commander, 342nd Military Police Company, attached to 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

"To assist the police of Tikrit we have encouraged them to focus on community policing – going out and getting familiar with their area – becoming familiar with the store

owners of the local shops, basically creating a positive public perception. Our partners have come a long way," he continued.

The ceremony allowed various local, district and provincial leaders to speak on the progression of the policemen of Tikrit and the forward direction that they envision Iraq going due to the continued efforts of the security forces of Iraq.

"The security situation is totally different compared to six years ago – we want to thank all who have cooperated with the Iraqi police to produce this result," said Mayor Wa'el Ibrahim, Mayor of Tikrit.

"The police of Tikrit have proven by securing the streets that they are ready to operate on their own," he added.

The ceremony ended with awards of appreciation handed out by senior Iraqi leadership to policemen who had contributed in building and strengthening Iraqi police forces to take on the responsibility of continually securing the streets of Tikrit.

Wolfhounds Compete in Best Ranger Competition During Deployment



Sgt. David Paul, reconnaissance team leader, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division and his teammate Sgt. 1st Class Derrick Wise, reconnaissance platoon sergeant, complete the final Buddy Run portion of the Best Ranger Competition during the 2009 event at Fort Benning, Ga., May 10. The two were a part of the first teams to compete in the competition while being in a deployed status in Iraq.

Capt. Lloyd Wohlschlegel, executive officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Division, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division and his fellow teammate 1st Lt. Raymond Kuderka, the battalion's military intelligence officer, finish the Buddy Run portion of the Best Ranger Competition during the 2009 event at Fort Benning, Ga., May 10. The two were a part of the first teams to compete in the competition while being in a deployed status in Iraq.



STORY and PHOTOS BY

Spc. Jazz Burney

3rd IBCT, 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, TIKRIT, Iraq – Four Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Division, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division "Wolfhounds", became the first teams from a deployed unit to compete in the Best Ranger Competition during the 2009 event at Fort Benning, Ga., May 8-11.

"To compete and finish Best Ranger is impressive, to do it from a deployed environment is miraculous," said Col. Walter Piatt, commander, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

The Wolfhound teams, which consisted of two commissioned officers and two non-commissioned officers from the battalion's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, showed high levels of confidence and motivation due to their extensive training prior to leaving Iraq for the grueling competition.

"Being in a deployed setting is actually a better training environment to participate in

the Best Ranger competition – we've had ranges that have been open to practice marksmanship when we need – we had explosive ordnance disposal Soldiers to train us on demolitions – we had medical personnel to train us – everything that would prepare us for success has been available here," said Capt. Lloyd Wohlschlegel, the company executive officer.

The rigorous training regimen to get the Wolfhound Soldiers ready for the competition took them to a higher level of professionalism as the team members found themselves increasing in proficiency in their basic infantry tasks and skills.

"Our train-up actually resembled preparing for an expert infantry badge. We rucked marched countless miles – working out four times a day, two days would be weight lifting and running, the other two was a focus on basic infantry skills training – medical, weapons assemble and disassembly. Basically if you take an EIB book we trained on it and became proficient in everything within our abilities," said 1st Lt. Raymond Kuderka, a military intelligence officer.

The two teams focused on the honor of being selected to represent their fellow comrades who would be still fighting while the team would be competing.

"Personally I felt very honored to even be considered – because I knew that I would be competing against all other units that were sending only their best Ranger qualified Soldiers – I would then be competing against the Best Rangers in the United States Army – making a mark for the Wolfhounds overseas," said Sgt. David Paul, reconnaissance team leader.

Lt. Col. Raul Gonzalez, the battalion commander, came up with the idea of having two teams made up of two commissioned officers and two noncommissioned officers to compete in the competition and represent the Wolfhounds, according to Sgt. 1st Class Derek Wise, reconnaissance platoon sergeant.

These four Soldiers went into the competition to represent the entire 25th Infantry Division. The teams showcased the spirit and drive of the Wolfhounds by finishing the competition in the 18th and 20th place out of 48 teams

This Week In TROPIC LIGHTNING History

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

MAY 27, 1966 – "Tropic Lightning" struck in force 40 miles northwest of Saigon last week as the 1st and 2nd Brigades began operation Wahiawa.

In the eighth day of the operation, the brigades were moving north and west from Cu Chi. They have accounted for 143 VC killed so far on the search-and-destroy mission.

One element of the division was helilifted into the Boi Loi woods, allegedly the birthplace of the National Liberation Front.

The area was found to contain large quantities of VC material and equipment although contact has been limited to isolated small groups of VC.

The first day of the operation saw the biggest capture of enemy medical supplies made to date.

According to 2nd Bde. Surgeon Captain Gerald R. Herrin, the VC medical supplies could last a battalion sized unit for at least a month.

"Most of the supplies were American, French, and a small amount of Vietnamese. All of it was modern

equipment."

"This is the best quality of medical supplies that I have seen captured," Capt. Herrin said. "We've captured nearly as much as this before but we've never gotten anything that compares with this in quality."

"This definitely hurt the VC," he said. "Just judging from what we've captured before, we've got some very valuable things from them."

Among the six large boxes of medical supplies were: 300 bolts of towel cloth, 80 syringes, 5,000 ampules of quinine, 1,400 strychnine ampules, 28,000 chloroquine tablets for malaria, 550 streptomycin ampules, 92 hepatrol injectable ampules, 50 cod liver oil ampules, 72 campolan ampules, 30 dolosal ampules, 400 bottles of penicillin and one dental kit, including a foot-driven drill.

On the second day of the operation, another 500 pounds of medical supplies were discovered by another division unit following a brief but fierce fire fight with a VC unit securing the storage area. Other division units have chalked up sizeable totals of captured enemy supplies, as cache after

cache was uncovered. As of 8 a.m. last Monday, division units had confiscated 21 small arms of Russian, Chinese, and American manufacture; 23,324 rounds of small arms ammunition; 4,000 lbs. of paraffin; 50 sheets of steel; 550 sheets of tin; 52 bicycles; and 704.1 tons of grain.

In addition, 138 structures had been destroyed as of Tuesday. Included in the figure were a VC mess area, command post and training center and seven base camps. Seventy-six tunnels, 12 bunkers, 13 trenches had been rendered unusable, 47 booby traps had been dismantled, and 13 VC sampans had been sunk.

In the base camps a complete munitions factory with equipment was discovered, along with seven pedal-operated sewing machines and 36,000 yards of cloth. Foodstuffs found, in addition to the large caches of rice, include 1,800 lbs. of dried fish and 2,900 lbs. of peanuts. The current operation was named after the Hawaii town of Wahiawa, located near the division, former Schofield Barracks home. Many division families still live in Wahiawa.

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

MAY 25, 1970 – CU CHI - "Echo One, this is Oscar Papa One Eight - have movement approximately 400 meters to our front, will stand by, over."

This could be any one of the members of the 25th Division's 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry, radar team reporting their sightings from their secluded radar post just outside Duc Hoa, 12 miles west of Saigon.

"Our mission is to check an area with radar and a starlight scope," said Specialist 4 Mike Ciwakala, of Grand Blanc, Mich. "I guess our job is pretty important, considering we are the main observation post for all of Duc Hoa and our battalion forward at Fire Support Base Chamberlain."

By putting their "Pipsi Five" radar and a large tripod-mounted starlight scope to work, the crew is able to scan the surrounding area, pinpointing any enemy that might venture into view.

"As soon as we spot movement and determine its identity and size, we give the location to our higher command," said Specialist 4 Walter Meade, of Woodside, N.Y. "They usually react by sending troops into the area."

The team operates from a small compound with security elements from one of the line companies.

"The ARVN help us with our security duties," said Specialist 4 Tom Gutirres, of Agana, Guam. "They even helped us build a large bunker for our radar."

Operating hours for the radar team are between dusk and dawn the next morning



ALERT – Specialist 4 Walter Meade of Woodside, N.Y. scans the open terrain with an ARVN soldier, as Private First Class Charles Blanchard of Detroit moves in to adjust the radar for nighttime use. The men operate and secure the radar for 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry "Wolfhounds."

In the daylight hours the men occupy themselves cleaning their weapons and equipment, reinforcing their defensive positions or just getting some well-deserved sleep.

"We have to get clearance and still be very careful when we fire at a target because of the many hamlets in the area," said Specialist 4 John Kits, from Ashville, N.C., a rifleman with the security element.

"Many nights we spot enemy groups and

it's really a temptation to fire on them," claimed Sergeant Stephen Ross, a squad leader of the security element, who is from Naugatuck, Conn. "But it's really not worth endangering the lives of the civilians."

Private First Class Charles Blanchard, the security element's machine gunner from Detroit, said, "I never realized how tremendous radar is - it's great to see Charlie before he sees you."

MEMORIAL DAY MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDER, MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION – NORTH*

Today marks the last Monday of the month of May, a day that is easily overlooked as just another day for those of us here in MND-N and Task Force Lightning; just another day closer to going home to friends and family and the lives we left behind when we deployed to Iraq.

What we must remember is that today also marks something else; Memorial Day, a day of remembrance and commemoration for those who have given the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our great nation, and the values we all hold dear.

Originally called Decoration Day at its inception 141 years ago, Memorial Day is often associated with backyard BBQs and a day off of work, or the end of a long weekend of travel, with the real meaning often being lost on the masses.

As Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines we have a personal connection to this day, and now, more than ever, we need to take a moment out of our busy schedules, a brief interlude in the fight, and pay tribute to those of our profession who are no longer with us today. We are in a war, a global war, with no end in sight, yet we continue to move forward every day, in the name of freedom, knowing that there are those in our ranks who will fall in battle. Many have fallen before us, and it is those brave individuals that we honor.

All across America, friends and family members of fallen servicemembers, will gather today at cemeteries to plant flags and lay flowers on the graves of loved ones. In many cases these were servicemembers that some of us may have known and served with. Communities will mark this day with parades and celebrations to honor true American heroes, heroes who defended freedom at home and abroad, and have done so since the birth of our great nation.

Joseph Campbell once said, "A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself." Those that we remember and honor today truly embody those words – they sacrificed their lives not only for their nation, but often for their brothers and sisters who were fighting alongside them. They unselfishly sacrificed their lives for the lives of others, giving up all that they could have been so that others could prosper and enjoy freedom.

As we honor America's heroes there is another group we must not forget, and that is the families that were left behind; please keep the husbands and wives, sons and daughters and mothers and fathers of the fallen in your thoughts and prayers, as they too have sacrificed much.

I would ask that everyone in MND-N, military and civilian alike, take a moment today to quietly reflect on and honor those who have fallen, and when you see an American flag, remember them and all that they have given.

Tropic Lightning!

ROBERT B. BROWN
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

NEWS FROM THE HOME FRONT

HAWAII

HONOLULU – John Amos will be thinking about his son today, the son who was given the same name, the son who was killed in Iraq on April 4, 2004.

But then again, there are few days when he doesn't think about "J.D.," a Schofield Barracks soldier who died when he was just 20.

Pfc. John D. Amos II suffered severe lower body injuries when a suicide car bomber detonated two artillery shells in the northern Iraq city of Kirkuk.

Amos, who lives in Las Vegas and last week was in Hawai'i for a memorial dedication at Schofield, wears a metal remembrance bracelet with his son's name. It's so worn, a lot of the original black color has come off.

He won't take it off – not even going through an airport metal detector; security has to use a hand wand.

A head and shoulders portrait of his uniformed son is tattooed on his upper left arm. An American flag is in the background.

"It'll never go away, but it gets different," Amos said of the pain five years after his son was killed. "You can look back at all of the times and laugh a little bit harder."

What hasn't changed is the pride he feels over his son's service.

"He got killed defending our flag," Amos said, "and that's all we can ask of anybody."

As the nation pauses today to recognize its war dead, the tally from ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continues to mount, and additional families and friends mourn their loss.

A total of 258 service members with Hawai'i ties have died in service since the start of the Iraq war in March 2003. Most were killed in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait.

The Pentagon reported that as of Friday, there have been 4,299 U.S. military and civilian deaths in Iraq, and 682 in Afghanistan.

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates urged the nation's men and women in uniform to observe a moment of silence today at 3 p.m. in each time zone "to remember our fallen heroes."

"It is important to think of the fallen on this day, but we should also keep in mind all of our servicemen and women throughout the year," Gates said. "They and their families continue to sacrifice for our country and deserve our recognition and support."

On Wednesday, the Hawai'i list of the fallen grew by one more in the steady tick of sacrifice.

Air Force 1st Lt. Roslyn L. Schulte, 25, who was from St. Louis, and assigned to Pacific Air Forces at Hickam Air Force Base, died in a roadside bomb blast in Afghanistan.

The intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance officer with the 613th Air and

Space Operations Center was in a convoy on the regularly traveled route from Camp Eggers in Kabul to Bagram Airfield.

Schulte was a 2006 Air Force Academy graduate. She was the academy's 10th graduate and first woman killed while supporting operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, the Air Force said.

"We are extremely saddened by the loss of Lt. Schulte," said Maj. Gen. Mike Hostage, Pacific Air Forces' vice commander. "She was a remarkable, devoted young officer. While this is a sad day for the Air Force, we will remember her for her bravery and the sacrifice she made for her country."

ALASKA

FAIRBANKS – Spring's first major thunderstorm brought scattered showers and more than a few lightning strikes across Interior and Southwest Alaska on Saturday afternoon. Though no rain was recorded by the National Weather Service at Fairbanks International Airport, more than 2,200 lightning strikes were detected.

Coupled with dry conditions after breakup, the lightning strikes sparked more than a dozen wildfires in Interior Alaska. None pose a threat to settled areas, but they might cause a smokier-than-normal Memorial Day for campers hoping to get away from town.

According to Alaska Fire Service spokesman Doug Stockdale, the state is monitoring 21 active wildfires.

Fourteen fires were reported between 4:45 and 7:45 p.m. Saturday.

The most notable of these was a three-acre blaze about two miles north of Harding Lake and 37 miles southeast of Fairbanks. Fairbanks and Delta Junction fire crews have been dispatched to fight the blaze, and two loads of fire retardant have been dropped from aircraft.

The Alaska Interagency Coordination Center, which monitors fires statewide, also reported a small fire in the Chatanika River and Washington Creek area 15 miles northwest of Fox.

Neither blaze poses a significant threat to any towns.

In light of the Memorial Day holiday and the dry conditions, Stockdale advised weekend campers to take extra care with campfires and stoves. "We can't do much about lightning-caused fires ... but we can prevent people-caused ones," he said.

TEXAS

KILLEEN – In honor of Memorial Day, volunteers decorated 1,200 veterans' graves with flags Sunday morning.

Organizers also presented a copy of a letter written by World War I soldier John Quincy Adams to American Legion Post No. 223, established and named for the soldier.

Sheryl Brown, who organized the event with her husband, Walter, said that they decided to do it after noticing that year after year no one decorated the veterans' graves at the Killeen City Cemetery.

Those buried there include Brown's father, a commander for the American Legion for more than 16 years; her mother, a treasurer for the Legion for 18 years; and her nephew, who was killed in service in Iraq.

The Browns acquired a list from the cemetery so that every veteran's grave would get a flag.

Ten American Legion members participated in the decorating, some others were from the Legion Riders, and the rest were volunteers invited by the Browns through their catering business, Big Boss BBQ. About 40 people participated. The catering business donated the flags.

Adams was born Dec. 23, 1894. He was the first of 13 soldiers from Killeen who died during World War I; 10 of the others died from pneumonia. Adams wrote the letter in October 1918 shortly before he was mortally wounded on Oct. 15.

The letter is "a friendly letter written to a friend," Brown said, and in it he describes trying to fit his whole body under that tin hat and watching a friend shaking, avoiding mortar rounds. Adams writes in the letter that he is running out of stationary, and it was marked OK by an official after he wrote it.

Adams died Nov. 22 of that year. Friends of his family established Post 223 in his honor. It was their first charge to secure his remains from France, where he died, and bring him back to Killeen to be buried.

Brown inherited the letter from her father, who was given the letter from a friend. She decided to give the post the letter because it's part of their history, and Killeen's history, as well.

"The commander was almost in tears," Brown said. "They're trying to do research, the younger people that are moving in, replacing the older veterans."

Brown said she thinks they helped to inspire the younger members to learn about the history of the Legion.

The Browns intend to make the grave decorating a tradition.

"The rain didn't scare us away today. Everyone who went today wants to do it again next year," Brown said.



LIGHTNING HERO OF THE WEEK

MAJ Melvin Juan
HQs, 25th Infantry Division
Kapolei, HI

On 22 May, during a Hula of Hawaii performance on FOB Marez MAJ Juan was able to bring a taste of the islands to Mosul, while at the same time assisting the performers from Hawaii. As the show began the performers experienced technical difficulties with their audio equipment, and sensing the unruliness of the crowd, MAJ Juan took a seat on stage and performed a ukulele accompanied version of Van Morrison's "Brown Eyed Girl." MAJ Juan's quick thinking, coupled with his technical expertise and personal courage provided the entertainers with the time they needed to correct their audio problem and perform the rest of their show.



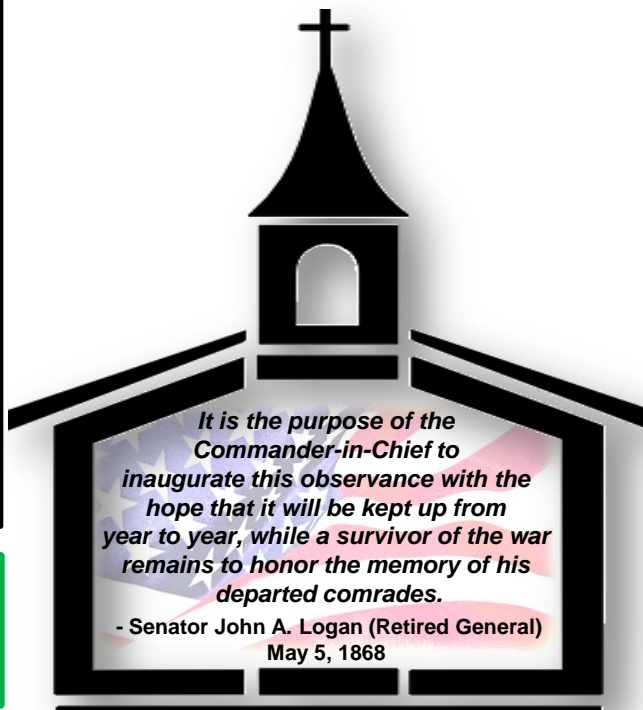
IRAQI FACTS

Ctesiphon was a prominent city in the Persian Parthian Empire during the first century BCE, located in modern day al-Mada'in, about 20 miles southeast of Baghdad. It was an important city for the ruling government, making it a prime target for attacks by the Roman Empire, and later by the Byzantine Empire. The city fell to Muslims during the Islamic Conquest of Persia in 637, under the direction of Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas. The population was unharmed, but the city was left in ruins. An impressive collection of books was supposedly held in a library at Ctesiphon, and Abi Waqqas wrote to Caliph Umar after he conquered the city on what should be done with the books. The Caliph denied any use for them, and they were all thrown into the Tigris River. After the Abbasids moved their capital to Baghdad in the 8th century, Ctesiphon lost its influence and was abandoned. It was the site of a major World War I battle in November 1915, where the Ottoman army defeated British forces trying to capture Baghdad.

The city is believed to have been the inspiration for the city of Isbanir in One Thousand and One Nights. Today, the only visible remnant of the city is the Taq-I Kisra arch. Saddam Hussein began a project to rebuild the ruins in the 1980s, but the work stopped at the start of the first Gulf War in 1991.

If you'd like to receive an electronic subscription of the *Lightning Weekly*, or have it go out to a family member, friend, loved one, or anyone else, send an e-mail request with the recipients' e-mail address to patrick.husted@25id.army.mil.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



It is the purpose of the Commander-in-Chief to inaugurate this observance with the hope that it will be kept up from year to year, while a survivor of the war remains to honor the memory of his departed comrades.

- Senator John A. Logan (Retired General)
 May 5, 1868



Clerics: We Don't Want to Ban Facebook, We Use It

JAKARTA, Indonesia – Indonesian Islamic clerics say they have not called for a ban on popular social networking sites like Facebook, and that they are avid users themselves.

According to media reports, the clerics in East Java had banned the faithful from gossiping and flirting on social networking Web sites such as Facebook and Friendster. They also demanded an end to "lewd and pornographic" content, the reports said.

However, Muchammad Nabil Haroen, a spokesman for the Liboryo Islamic Boarding School, told CNN Monday that they were not after a ban and that he and several other clerics had Facebook accounts.

Haroen said that a meeting of about 700 clerics at the boarding school last week had issued guidelines on the use of online networks and mobile phones, saying Web sites like Facebook should only be used for "positive" purposes like networking and seeking old friends.

"If Facebook is used for negative purposes like drug dealing or prostitution, then it's forbidden," he clarified.

If it was used for such offences the clerics could push for a fatwa or edict, he said.

He stressed that the clerics' statement was only a recommendation for the Indonesian Council of Religious Scholars and the Nahdlatul Ulama, one of the country's largest Muslim organizations, to consider.

Choli Nafis, deputy head of Nahdlatul Ulama's Fatwa Commission, confirmed the organization had received the recommendation but said: "Facebook is just a tool, like a car or a television. If people use it in a good way, there's no need to ban it."

Nafis too, uses Facebook.

The most recent fatwas include bans on smoking in public and the practice of yoga that incorporates religious rituals like chanting and meditation. These have largely been ignored by Indonesian Muslims.

A survey cited by alexa.com, which tracks Internet traffic, and that appeared in The Jakarta Post, found that Facebook was the top ranked site in Indonesia.

Nearly four percent of all Facebook users come from Indonesia, making it the largest source of visitors after the United States, United Kingdom, France and Italy.

SPORTING NEWS

Danica's Day Ends With Cool, Collected Third Place

INDIANAPOLIS – Danica Patrick had a win in the Indianapolis 500 in sight.

With only 17 laps to go, only a pair of former winners – Helio Castroneves and Dan Wheldon – stood between IndyCar racing's glamour girl and the biggest victory of her life Sunday.

A gaffe in the pits cost her positions early in the race, but she still had her chance, thanks to a caution flag that set up a final restart.

Once again, though, Patrick came up just a little bit short – even if she is getting closer.

"I had a lot of momentum and I thought I was going to pass Dan on the restart, but that didn't happen," Patrick said. "He went low and I wasn't going to be able to make an outside pass at that point."

Patrick wound up having to settle for third place, trailing winner Castroneves and runner-up Wheldon past the checkered flag.

But the driver who burst into the national consciousness and set off "DanicaMania" when she became the first woman to lead laps and finished fourth in the 2005 Indy 500 was happy with her performance.

And she was particularly grateful for the guidance of longtime racing star and Andretti Green Racing co-owner Michael Andretti, who kept her calm and focused throughout a hot, frustrating afternoon.

"He's a very passionate guy," Patrick said. "He gets very into it. But he was just staying very calm."

"He'd tell me 'Good job' every now and then, and he was obviously telling me when to cool down and stuff like that," she added. "The most important thing about that, having a voice in your ear, is (for him) to be calm."

That was one reason Andretti took over as Patrick's race strategist this year, believing the sometimes tempestuous 27-year-old needed a steadying influence.

He was proud of Patrick, who kept her temper in check despite making a pit mistake that cost her four positions at midrace and then being passed on a different restart by Ryan Briscoe, the same driver who crashed into her car and knocked her out of last year's Indy 500.

"We knew she had a good car if we could get her track position," Andretti said. "We did that and she made some passes. It was unfortunate that she had that one deal where she fell back because that might have changed things a little bit more at the end."

"I believe if she would have passed Dan, I think she had a shot at Helio," he added.

"But, unfortunately, she didn't get him on the restart because Dan was getting the tow from Helio. If she would have gotten him, it would have been an interesting finish."

When Patrick slid through her pit box on a stop during a caution period on the 100th lap, the mistake dropped her from sixth to 10th and potentially spoiled her race.

"I'm really sorry, guys," she told her crew on the radio. "All my fault. I'm really sorry."

"It's OK. You'll get it back," Andretti said quietly.

She listened to her boss, keeping her head later in the race when Briscoe jumped the gun and zoomed past on a restart on lap 141.

Patrick complained to Andretti and, again, he told her to stay calm. Within two laps, Indy Racing League officials ordered Briscoe to back off and let Patrick move past.

At the end, Patrick, who has four top-10 finishes in five Indy starts, was smiling.

"It was a good day overall and, for the tough month that we had, to keep our heads down all day, it turned out pretty good," she said.

AGR teammate Hideki Mutoh finished 10th, but it wasn't a great day for the rest of the team. Marco Andretti, Michael's 22-year-old son, crashed out on the first lap, and team veteran Tony Kanaan crashed while running third.

"But still we had a top three and it speaks well for our team that every year that we've been here as a team we've had a top three," Michael Andretti said. "That's cool."

It was third year in a row that three women have been in the Indy lineup, and it was by far the best day yet for the small female contingent in the 33-car field as driver-owner Sarah Fisher finished 17th and Milka Duno 20th.

"We learned a lot," Fisher said. "This is only our second year in the 500 as a team. We had amazing pit stops. Every time I came in, we gained spots. We're going to get a little bit better car, and we'll come back next year."

Fisher finished on the lead lap, while Duno, who crashed in her two previous starts here, was a lap off the pace and the last car running.

"I'm in Indianapolis and I finished the race," Duno said. "I'm happy for that."

Patrick was satisfied, too, although she couldn't help but think what might have been.

"I think it was a good day," she said. "I'm really happy. I wish it would have ended up a little bit better than what it did, but that's the way it goes here."

TASK FORCE LIGHTNING – THROUGH THE LENS



1st Lt. Addison Palanza, executive officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division takes a knee during a combined security sweep with local Iraqi police of farmland in Owja, in efforts to find and remove caches or other dangerous materials from the area, May 15.



Specialist Tyler Lishman, CP-North, 25th Infantry Division, watches a young Iraqi boy play soccer on the street in the town of Bartalla, May 21. Bartalla is a small town in Ninewa Province.



Colonel Matthew Russell, commander, 18th Engineer Brigade, tries on a grass skirt prior to showing off some hula moves at the of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month celebration on FOB Marez, May 23.



First Sgt. Rice and Pfc. Gomez from B Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division move between clearing teams during Operation Warhorse Scimitar, a sweep, clear and census operation in west Mosul, Iraq making sure everything is going off without a hitch on April 23.

HEROES OF THE 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION



- Capt. Ronald Eric Ray
- Co. A, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry 25th Infantry Division
- Born: 7 December 1941, Cordelle, Georgia
- Entered Service: Atlanta, Georgia
- Place of Action: Ia Drang Valley, South Vietnam
- Date of Action: 19 June 1966



Ronald E. Ray

Medal of Honor Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Capt. Ray distinguished himself while serving as a platoon leader with Company A. When 1 of his ambush patrols was attacked by an estimated reinforced Viet Cong company, Capt. Ray organized a reaction force and quickly moved through 2 kilometers of mountainous jungle terrain to the contact area. After breaking through the hostile lines to reach the beleaguered patrol, Capt. Ray began directing the reinforcement of the site. When an enemy position pinned down 3 of his men with a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire, he silenced the emplacement with a grenade and killed 4 Viet Cong with his rifle fire. As medics were moving a casualty toward a sheltered position, they began receiving intense hostile fire. While directing suppressive fire on the enemy position, Capt. Ray moved close enough to silence the enemy with a grenade. A few moments later Capt. Ray saw an enemy grenade land, unnoticed, near 2 of his men. Without hesitation or regard for his safety he dove between the grenade and the men, thus shielding them from the explosion while receiving wounds in his exposed feet and legs. He immediately sustained additional wounds in his legs from an enemy machinegun, but nevertheless he silenced the emplacement with another grenade. Although suffering great pain from his wounds, Capt. Ray continued to direct his men, providing the outstanding courage and leadership they vitally needed, and prevented their annihilation by successfully leading them from their surrounded position. Only after assuring that his platoon was no longer in immediate danger did he allow himself to be evacuated for medical treatment. By his gallantry at the risk of his life in the highest traditions of the military service, Capt. Ray has reflected great credit on himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.

HEROES OF THE 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION



- Chief Warrant Officer Frederick Edgar Ferguson
- Company C, 227th Aviation Battalion,
1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)
- Born: 18 August 1939, Pilot Point, Texas
- Entered Service: Phoenix, Arizona
- Place of Action: Hue, Republic of Vietnam
- Date of Action: 31 January 1968



Frederick E. Ferguson

Medal of Honor Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. CWO Ferguson, U.S. Army distinguished himself while serving with Company C. CWO Ferguson, commander of a resupply helicopter monitoring an emergency call from wounded passengers and crewmen of a downed helicopter under heavy attack within the enemy controlled city of Hue, unhesitatingly volunteered to attempt evacuation. Despite warnings from all aircraft to stay clear of the area due to heavy antiaircraft fire, CWO Ferguson began a low-level night at maximum airspeed along the Perfume River toward the tiny, isolated South Vietnamese Army compound in which the crash survivors had taken refuge. Coolly and skillfully maintaining his course in the face of intense, short range fire from enemy occupied buildings and boats, he displayed superior flying skill and tenacity of purpose by landing his aircraft in an extremely confined area in a blinding dust cloud under heavy mortar and small-arms fire. Although the helicopter was severely damaged by mortar fragments during the loading of the wounded, CWO Ferguson disregarded the damage and, taking off through the continuing hail of mortar fire, he flew his crippled aircraft on the return route through the rain of fire that he had experienced earlier and safely returned his wounded passengers to friendly control. CWO Ferguson's extraordinary determination saved the lives of 5 of his comrades. His actions are in the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on himself and the U.S. Army .