

Lightning Weekly

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JUN 15, 2009

Modern Soldiers Continue Forward

U.S. Soldiers deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom continue to live by the Army values and uphold a historic record of prestige, honor and valor which began 234 years ago



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jesus J. Aranda, Task Force Lightning Public Affairs



FROM THE DESK OF ‘LIGHTNING 6’

☆☆ A Commitment to Excellence ☆☆



Maj. Gen. Robert L. Caslen Jr.

June 14 is the Army's 234th birthday. This day is an opportunity to pause and reflect on the sacrifices made by our Soldiers and the steadfast commitment to service demonstrated by all wearing a uniform today.

Since 1775, Soldiers have proudly served at places like the Solomons, the Phillipines, Guadalcanal, Taejun, Kaesong, Tay Ninh, Pleiku, Baqubah, Riyadh, Mosul - and many others. They have put their boots on the ground at locations around the world to guarantee freedom, preserve peace and defend democracy.

Our Army is the most respected and most professional land fighting power on Earth because of our Soldiers' commitment to service. This commitment is only possible by the extraordinary willingness of the Soldier's Ohana and friends to sacrifice their own individual freedoms to support their Soldier.

This willingness to sacrifice today in order to create a better tomorrow is what makes our Army, our nation, and our people truly strong. American

Soldiers, and their Ohanas, exemplify selfless service, and we dedicate this day in recognition of that unwavering commitment.

We all now recognize that a "service commitment" is more than just an enlistment contract, a mobilization, or a period of obligation. We are all members of a volunteer force committed to serving our Country, and building a better tomorrow. And while Soldiers and their families do not take this commitment and all the challenges it brings casually, today's Soldiers face different challenges than Soldiers of generations past.

The Army is engaged in two wars and maintains commitments to our nation's allies throughout the world. This commitment may mean moving often, enrolling in children new schools, adapting to new and sometimes foreign environments, children going to bed at night missing their parent to tuck them in, or parents missing out on sporting events, recitals, plays, or prayers. We make these sacrifices because we believe that our commitment will build a better tomorrow for those that we care about.

On this 234th birthday, every Soldier here in Multi-National Division - North is a walking example of commitment to service and a valued member of this team – the United States Army! Be proud of your work; you are making a difference with your commitment and sacrifice. Be proud of the values that keep you and our Army the best in the world.

Hau'oli la hanau, United States Army!



TROPIC LIGHTNING!

Maj. Gen. Robert L. Caslen Jr.
Commanding General
Task Force Lightning
Multi-National Division - North

Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers deliver food, soccer balls in Kirkuk province



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
Staff Sgt. Jason Douglas
2nd HBCT, 1st Cavalry Division

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq – Iraqi Police and Coalition Forces brought a little relief to the Iraqi village of Qutan in Kirkuk province, June 6.

IP from the Mari police sub-station in the Dibbis district, assisted by Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, delivered 150 bags of food consisting of beans, rice, cooking oil, and tomatoes.

According to 1st Lt. Winfield Swanton, a Holden, Maine native and platoon leader in 1st Bn., 8th Cav. Regt., the food is purchased from local vendors to help support the local community.



Spc. Marvin Pena, Boston, Mass. native and an armor crewman in 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, pulls security as Iraqi Police distribute food to the Iraqi village of Qutan in Kirkuk province, June 6. “Aside from the food delivery, the soccer balls let them see that we are here to help,” said 1st Lt. Winfield Swanton, a platoon leader with 1st Bn., 8th Cav. Regt., 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Douglas, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Public Affairs)



Staff Sgt. Dean Hills, Live Oak, Fla. native and a dismounted infantryman squad leader in 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, assists Iraqi Police distribute food to the Iraqi village of Qutan in Kirkuk province, June 6. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Douglas, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Public Affairs)

The village mukhtar gathered the residents of Qutan near a school and while Swanton’s Soldiers handled security, the IP delivered the food.

Staff Sgt. Dean Hills, a Live Oak, Fla. native and a dismounted infantryman squad leader in 1st Bn., 8th Cav. Regt., said the process for choosing which villages receive the assistance begins with coordination with the IP.

“We get with the IP or Iraqi Army and find the poorest villages that need the aid,” Hills said. “This village’s crops aren’t doing well due to the drought and because of the large swine population, which are eating the crops.”

According to U.S. Air Force weather data, Kirkuk province is suffering from a four year drought,

which has had an adverse impact on farming, one of the main sources of revenue in Kirkuk.

While the IP delivered the food, 1st Bn., 8th Cav. Regt Soldiers passed out several soccer balls to a group of eager children gathered at the school.

“Aside from the food delivery, the soccer balls let them see that we are here to help,” Swanton said. Swanton said this was the second food drop his platoon has performed.

“The first food delivery we did was in Qushquaya,” Swanton said. “We plan on doing these types of missions with the IP or IA once a week.”



Tikrit University Extends Education Opportunities to Local Iraqi Youth



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
Capt. Dan Sem
3rd IBCT, 25th ID Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING

BASE SPEICHER, TIKRIT, Iraq –

The small team of Soldiers walked guardedly into the Student Union at Tikrit University in Salah ad-Din Province, Iraq, amidst both jeers and welcomes. On a campus that usually equates coalition presence with combat operations, lingering memories of past night-time dormitory raids stood as a wall between Soldiers and the suspicious glances that greeted them.

Overcoming the prejudices of history was the mission of the day. Putting Soldiers and Iraqi students together for casual, friendly conversation in English, the weapon.

“For most of the students, it’s the first time they spoke with an American,” Omar, a student in the university’s English Department, said. “A lot of them are nervous because it is their first time meeting an American.”

The conversational English meetings at Tikrit University this spring were the first of its kind in Salah ad-Din province, and brought together a team of Soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division and members of the Salah ad-Din Provincial Reconstruction Team to speak with about thirty Iraqi students.

The aim was not only to help the students practice their spoken English, but to also open the door to the University to usher in exchange and partnership programs with American universities, find Fulbright Scholarship applicants, and partner university departments with subject matter experts from the coalition.

Since its inception this spring, the university partnership program has proven successful as summer approaches. The university hosted numerous English exchanges, a college fair for English-language universities, video teleconferences with American universities, and more. But the first small step to this grander goal happened months ago with the initial task of breaking through students’ misconceptions of coalition forces and the fear of being associated with them.

“Our initial reception on campus was kind of edgy,” said 1st Lt. Daniel Jarvis, an operations officer with the 3IBCT.

Jarvis did not want to be left guessing at the reason for the negative welcome, so he asked some of the more friendly Iraqi students that he met with in the Student Union to explain it to him.

“They said for students and faculty who speak English, they understand our new mission,” Jarvis said. “Those who don’t, still see us as what we wear.”

Ahmed, a student in the college of law, said that the distance some students give to Americans is not so much out of personal dislike, but out of the perceived risk a relationship with coalition forces may carry.

“They are very worried maybe a bad guy will get them,” Ahmed said. Omar, said that talking to Americans still carries a negative connotation on the campus.

“If we speak with Americans someone might think we are agents or spies,” He said, adding that he does not care what others think.

Omar said that those gathered in the Student Union for the first English-language session viewed the visiting Soldiers in a different light.

“They like Americans, they want to speak with Americans,” Omar said. “If they don’t like Americans, they would not come.”

More than 350 students attended a college fair held on campus and hosted by the Salah ad-Din PRT.

Colleges and universities from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia sent recruiting materials to the PRT to establish a study-abroad center.

The response from nearly 200 schools was so enormous, the PRT decided to host a college fair to give students, Soldiers and the PRT another chance to interact before the summer break.

Brett Bruen, a State Department diplomat who organized the English-speaking initiative, said the response from the Iraqi students was more than he had hoped for.

“I had high expectations,” Bruen said. “But I didn’t expect to be as warmly received as we were.”

“I think this is an opening,” he added. “There is a new chapter we are writing in Iraq and there is no better place to start than the university.”



COP Courage transferred to Iraqi Security Forces



By **Pfc. Jared Sollars**
3rd HBCT, 1st Cavalry Division

MOSUL, Iraq — Across all of Iraq, Coalition Forces are working toward withdrawal from major cities in Iraq and turning over their combat outposts and installations to Iraqi Security Forces, the Iraqi Government or previous property owners, in accordance with the Security Agreement requiring all combat troops out of the Iraq’s cities by June 30.

Command Outpost Courage, located in eastern Mosul, is no

different. It is being prepared for transition to the Iraqi Army prior to June 30. The outpost, originally a palace used by Saddam Hussein’s daughter, has had consistent Coalition forces presence for approximately six years allowing both Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces the ability to react quickly to incidents in Mosul.

“The COP allowed us to act as a quick reaction force,” said 1Lt. John Petersen, 1st platoon leader for Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment. “If something happened out in sector and an element needed back up, we were

able to respond within five to ten minutes.”

With the closures of COP’s such as Courage, the Iraqi Security Forces will take the lead of the security in their cities.

“This will mark the end of a U.S. presence in eastern Mosul with all these buildings being turned back over to the Iraqi Army,” said Petersen. “A lot of Iraqi Army soldiers feel that they are ready to step up for this new challenge.”

The help will come from transition teams, as part of the ongoing partnership with the Iraqi Security Forces and U.S Forces.



Lt. Col. Sa’ad Mahsen, the commanding officer of 3rd Battalion, 12th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, speaks during a Transfer of Authority ceremony , June 7, at Combat Outpost Power in east Mosul, Iraq. U.S. Army photo by Army Pfc. Sharla Perrin, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs)

Hand-off of ‘Power’ marks fourth U.S. outpost closure in Mosul



By **3rd HBCT, 1st Cavalry Division**
Public Affairs Office

MOSUL, Iraq - Combat outposts located throughout Mosul are closing, as the deadline nears for U.S. combat troops to withdraw from Iraqi cities, as part of their ongoing commitment to the Security Agreement between the two nations.

Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division handed command of Combat Outpost Power, in east Mosul, over to 3rd Battalion, 12th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division in a Transfer of Authority ceremony, June 7.

“There was a great turn-out by all levels of command on both the Iraqi side and the U.S. side,” said Capt. Gene Palka, the commander of Btry. A. “This is a great day; the transfer is a good thing that’s happened.”

Intended for troops to embed with the Iraqi Security Forces stationed throughout the city, the COPs were often only big enough to inhabit two platoon-sized elements. Soldiers worked with their Iraqi counterparts, conducting patrols and getting to know the outpost’s surrounding community in order to gain a clear understanding of their counterparts’ capabilities.

The ceremony marked the fourth COP closure in Ninewa province and another step by Task Force “Greynwolf” – 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division - towards fulfilling the terms of a security agreement set between the United States and Iraq requiring the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops from Iraq’s cities by June 30.

A Meeting of Regional Governors



By **Sgt. Brian Allen**
Command Post - North Public Affairs

MOSUL, Iraq – Two men, governors of neighboring regions and both working for the continued improvement of the nation of Iraq, met for the first time with the goal of improving relations between their provinces.

Athiel Al Nujayfi, Governor of the northern Iraq province of Ninewa, and Nawzad Hady, the governor of Irbil and representative of the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, met at Forward Operating Base

Diamondback, near Mosul, Iraq, June 6, to formally discuss methods of improving cooperative efforts between the geographically close, but sometimes culturally distant neighbors.

The meeting is one step toward political dialogue and understanding of the needs of both provinces.

At meeting's end, both governors exchanged well wishes and intend to meet often in the pursuit of improving the quality of life for their citizens.



Athiel Al Nujayfi, Governor of the northern Iraq province of Ninewa (left) and Nawzad Hady, the governor of Irbil, and representative of the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, meet formally for the first time in an effort to foster good relations between their respective provinces at Forward Operating Base Diamondback, near Mosul, Iraq, June 6.



(U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Melanie Trollinger, 145th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

4th Iraqi Army Division, Engineers build a better Iraq



By **Staff Sgt. Melanie Trollinger**
145th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Pvt. Jaoudat Jala looks on as Pvt. Ari Aziz, both assigned to the 4th Iraqi Army Division, cuts plywood for a classroom they are helping to build at Contingency Operating Location Spider, Tikrit, Iraq. With the help of Company C, 84th Engineer Battalion, 25th Infantry Division, Iraqi soldiers at COL Spider have completed several construction projects which will be used for 4th IA training facilities. Jala shared his gratitude for the opportunity to learn. "We need to continue learning these kinds of things for when the Americans leave," Jala said.

In the Army NOW!

By Pfc. Jesus J. Aranda, Task Force Lightning Public Affairs



Episode 01: The Mansion Mystery!

Join us next week for **Episode 02: A Volatile Cocktail!**

Operation shifts effort to outreach in Diyala Province



By 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team
Public Affairs Office

Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Diyala, Iraq – Residents throughout Diyala province have been receiving humanitarian aid from Iraqi Security Forces along with members of the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, as part of Operation “Glad Tidings of Benevolence II,” which began May 1.

Thus far, approximately 23 areas have received humanitarian aid distributions, while 19 more are planned for the near future.

The distributions are conducted as part of a combined venture to help those most in need within the province.

Residents have received rice, sugar, grain or other cooking necessities, and local school children in need of school supplies receive pencils, paper or recreational items such as soccer balls.

The assistance not only aids the people of the region but also helps to build stronger bonds between the residents and the local security forces who distribute them.

“With the greatly improved security posture of a majority of cities in Diyala, the provincial government has begun to provide and re-establish critical essential services to the population, provided crucial humanitarian assistance in the form of food, water, and medical supplies to areas in desperate need,” said Lt. Col. Thomas Bayer, deputy officer for the southern command post, Multi-National Division- North.



A team of workers in Riyadh clean out a canal that is used to distribute water throughout the Riyadh district. (Photo by 2nd SBCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Cleaning Kirkuk's Canals



By Maj. James S. Rawlinson
2nd HBCT, 1st Cavalry Division

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq —

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division recently employed 85 people around the town of Riyadh to help clean the canals which distribute water throughout the district.

Water released from the Dokan Dam flows down stream via the Lower Zab River to the Dibbis reservoir in western Kirkuk province.

There it is released periodically based on seasonal agricultural needs and water availability, according to Lt. Col Hugh McNeely, the deputy commander of 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team and the lead for economics and governance for the military efforts in Kirkuk province.

Once the water is released, it

flows through miles of earthen or concrete lined canals to provide citizens with water for drinking and use by farmers for irrigation.

According to the Kirkuk Provincial Reconstruction Team, much of the arable land in Kirkuk province relies on rainfall for irrigation. Kirkuk is currently in its fourth year of a province-wide drought, according to U.S. Air Force weather data.

Therefore, the land that is irrigated must be carefully regulated to maximize the availability of existing water.

“The Riyadh Canal project employees are diligent workers,” explained Capt. Miguel Valdez, 3rd platoon leader of Company B, 1st Bn, 8th Cavalry and native of Houston. “Even in the hot weather, they are making good progress. It’s good to know that these young men can bring home income for their families.”



Iraqi Special Operations Forces train for air-assault missions



STORY BY
Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Carr
10th Combat Aviation Brigade

FORWARD OPERATING BASE

GABE, Iraq – In the past, Iraqi forces have relied on the U.S. military to plan and execute air assault missions.

Now they are taking the steps needed to plan and execute their own with assistance from U.S. Special Forces and 10th Combat Aviation Brigade crews and aircraft.

The 10th Combat Aviation Brigade's 2nd Battalion partnered with U.S. Special Forces June 1-2 to teach air-assault operations to Iraqi Special Operation Forces.

"In the past, it was U.S. led operations with a few Iraqi forces," explained Lt. Col. Lee Shepherd, 2-10 Aviation Battalion commander. "Then it was a 50/50 mix of U.S. and Iraqi Forces. Now, it's progressed to Iraqi forces in the lead and us providing some support."

Recently, Shepherd and key members of the Battalion, along with U.S. Special Forces Soldiers, sat down with an Iraqi Special Operations Force commander in the Diyala province to explain the first steps of planning an air assault mission.

"This was the 'shake hands' portion and to show what capabilities we can provide," Shepherd said. "We briefed them on 'Air Assault 101,' the basics. We said 'this is what you need to have and know in order to be successful in an air assault.'"

Although the briefing was basic, the ISOF commander said he and his Soldiers benefited from the training and expertise of the American Soldiers.

"They showed us the importance for ground troops to understand the coordination needed with aviation troops," explained Col. Abed Al



Iraq Special Operations Forces maintain security while waiting for a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during air assault training, June 4, at Forward Operating Base Gabe in Baqubah, Iraq. (Photo illustration by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Emmanuel Rios)

Meer Kasem Muhammad, Diyala province Iraqi Special Operations Force commander. "These are the basics, and we learned a lot from the briefing."

Muhammad expressed his desire to gain the experience to allow his troops to perform air assault missions on their own.

"I'm eager to get my soldiers to start the practical training. The sooner we learn these skills, the sooner we can rid this area of terrorism and the sooner we will have peace," Muhammad said.

This isn't the first time Shepherd's battalion has worked with Iraqi Forces. The two partnered in the past to perform many missions with the Pathfinder Company, a unit which is part of the 10th CAB. Shepherd said they have seen an improvement in Iraqi forces' capabilities and that the Iraqis are taking the lead in providing security.

"When we first arrived in country, we worked primarily with the U.S. forces on air assault missions. Iraqi forces were on the mission but

purely in a supporting role," Shepherd explained. "As the months passed, it became more of a partnership on the mission. Now, each mission is becoming primarily Iraqi forces, with a small contingent of U.S. forces. We are working so that missions can be Iraqi-planned and led with very little, if any, U.S. ground force involvement."

As the U.S. military prepares to withdraw and the Iraqi government takes control of securing their own country, Shepherd believes that air assault is a viable tactic that the Iraqi forces can learn and use.

"We are helping to build the capacity for an Army to lead itself, sustain itself and protect itself," Shepherd explained. "We are training them to rapidly travel across the battle space and strike an insurgent cell or an extremist cell when they do not expect it."



'Tropic Lightning' Security Detachment:

Helping provide for the youth of Tikrit



STORY AND PHOTOS BY

Pfc. Jesus J. Aranda

Task Force Lightning Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING

BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – Soldiers with the 25th Special Troops Battalion, 25th Infantry Division's Security Detachment execute a very important mission, forming personal working relationships with local Iraqis.

On this day the Security Detachment's mission was to donate boxes of books to young Iraqi children at boys and girls schools within their area of operation.

The detachment typically visits the principals, teachers, and leaders of the local schools and area several times a week, according to 1st Lt. Hugo Flores-Diaz, a Woodbridge, Va. native and team leader, Security Detachment, 25th Special Troops Battalion, 25th Inf. Div.

"Usually we donate books to first through sixth grade schools, which are known as primary schools," said Hussain Alsoltani, an interpreter attached to the security detachment, who was raised in Iraq.

"When I was growing up in Iraq during primary school, I looked at teachers as secondary parents," said Alsoltani. "They taught values, as well as schooling."

For Alsoltani, who participates on many missions with the detachment during their visits to the local area schools, there are many similarities between the children of Iraq and the children of the U.S.

"A lot is the same," said Alsoltani. "Here you have cliques, bullies, children who excel in their studies. All kinds of children, just like anywhere else."

Flores-Diaz mirrored the same



A Soldier with the 25th STB Security Detachment, assists with unloading several boxes of books at a primary school near Tikrit, Iraq.

sentiment as Alsoltani, with regards to the similarities shared between the youth and education of both nations.

"In some of the schools, I see where I came from when I was growing up," said Flores-Diaz. "I try to make more of an effort to try to build a more professional relationship with them to get things done to improve the schools and area."

Alsoltani feels the importance placed on schooling in Iraq has faltered due to the recovering, yet still fragile state of Iraq during a time of reconstruction.

"I think a bit has changed since I was going to school here," Alsoltani said. "It was a priority for parents to send their kids to school; to teach them to read and write and send them all the way up to college."

"Nowadays, because of the war, because of the security issues, a lot

of parents just rather have their kids stay at home," said Alsoltani.

Still, there remain many parents and townspeople who continue to contribute toward the education of the village's children by chipping in when the schools can't raise the funds.

"Sometimes the schools lack the funds to buy books, build bathrooms or classrooms or get desks," said Flores-Diaz. "Everything they have up to this point has been supplied by someone from the village, or other parents, to help improve the schools."

Despite some challenges, Alsoltani feels, with the help of the Iraqi people, the country of Iraq is on its way toward improving their children's education system.

"It will take time, the government is still establishing itself, but I think the education system is going back to how it was and maybe better," Alsoltani said.

"The community around does its best to bolster what the schools have," said Flores-Diaz. "We do our best to help out."

The detachment also helps out by donating school supplies and sporting goods for the children of primary and secondary schools.

Taking time out to assist the local community and to nurture the development of the young children of Iraq is a duty which the members of the Security Detachment see as a good investment.

"We try to help the kids that we know are the future of Iraq," said Alsoltani. "This is the generation that will build Iraq."



“Greywolf” Soldiers from 4-9 Cav react to grenade attack, save lives



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
Sgt. Christopher Kozloski
3rd HBCT, 1st Cavalry Division

MOSUL, Iraq — The silence was booming as the compact conference room inside the operations center filled up with Soldiers from 1st and 2nd Platoon, B. Troop, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, attached to 3rd “Greywolf” Heavy Brigade Combat Team, June 12.

The reason for the gathering was two-fold. First, they came to welcome back their first sergeant who was injured during a grenade attack June 6. Second, they came to recount their actions in the streets of Mosul that day.

“We were out on a routine mission that Saturday,” said 2nd Lt. Eric Dixon, 1st Platoon leader. “We had a meeting with an Iraqi National Police intelligence officer and a visit to 2nd Iraqi National Police Company, who operate in the Jalil neighborhood.”

The platoon pulled up to the combat outpost to meet with their IP counterparts.

“We were spreading out around the vehicles to secure the area when we noticed a man motioning for permission to cross the street,” said Dixon, an Anacoco, La. native. “That’s when we saw him pull a grenade out of a black bag and throw it at us.”

Staff Sgt. Homero Bazaldua and Spc. Ethan Wagner, from Melbourne, Fla., instinctively reacted by engaging the grenade thrower.

The attacker fell to the ground as the grenade rolled to 1st Sgt. Brian Allen’s vehicle and exploded as they were dismounting.

Allen, along with Cpl. Adam Seiffert, the vehicle gunner and

dismounted Soldier, Pfc. Thaddeus Hewitt were injured from the blast.

Spc. Michael Caruso, the platoon’s senior medic, immediately went to work on the injured Soldiers, his first sergeant being the most critical of the three.

“I just started working on him, cleaning his wounds out and packing them with field dressings so I could stop the bleeding and get him ready to move,” said Caruso, native of Phoenix, Ariz.

While Caruso worked diligently on the first sergeant, Dixon coordinated with the IP, who were helping secure the area. He and his Soldiers handed off the scene to the IP and rushed the first sergeant to the combat support hospital for further treatment.



1st Sgt. Brian Allen poses with Sgt. 1st Class Billy Burruss, platoon sergeant for 1st Platoon, B. Troop, 4th Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt., after receiving a ping-pong ball and paddle as a recovery gift during his stay at the Forward Operating Base Marez Combat Support Hospital after being wounded by a grenade attack in the Jalil neighborhood of Mosul, June 6. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christopher Kozloski, 145th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Sgt. Andrew McConico, senior medic for 2nd Platoon, rushed to the attacker and began treating his wounds.

After initial treatment, McConico was able to stop the bleeding and prepare the attacker for medical

evacuation. The unit discussed the next move with the ISF and decided to evacuate him to be treated by Coalition Forces at the combat support hospital.

“It’s my job as a medic to treat people. This guy was a non-combatant at that point. It was my duty to do what I could to keep him alive,” said McConico, a native of Minneapolis, Minn.

“Hopefully, if we can keep guys like this alive, we can find out who they were working with or who supplied them with weapons used in attacks. By saving his life, we might be able to save more lives in the long run.”

The attacker survived. He was rushed to the combat support hospital for additional medical care

The first sergeant spent a week at the combat support hospital, recovering from his wounds and preparing to rejoin his men to finish out their deployment.

Moments before 1st Sgt. Allen entered the unit’s operations center, Caruso, the medic who initially treated him, looked around the room at his fellow Soldiers that had been there that day.

“The important thing is that we are all here together and that we are all going home together,” he said.

“My guys reacted to the situation based on their training and the medics went out there and did what they do. We did the right thing on the battlefield that day. We always do,” said Allen, from Phlugerville, Texas.



LIGHTNING HERO OF THE WEEK

Spc. Quinnesha Rich
Company F, 1st Battalion, 67th Armor Regt.
Cocoa, Fla.

SPC Quinnesha Rich has distinguished herself above her peers. Rich chose to waive her dwell time so she could deploy with her unit as a Supply Specialist. Rich was in charge of the ordering and distribution of the Army Direct Ordering Program, distributing items for all Forward Support Company Soldiers on 3 bases and also insured ordering of unit supplies and company shortages. Rich flawlessly executed her duties making the transition much easier for both the outgoing and incoming company. Rich also exceeded the AFPT standards by scoring a 322 on her physical fitness test setting the bar for all of her peers to aspire to reach.



IRAQI TRIVIA

Gracious hosts to all guests, people of the Arabic culture welcome all guests into their homes, places of business or gatherings with incredible hospitality.

To many Arabic people, the worth of a person as host is measured by how well he can make his guests feel at home.

This is achieved by creating a festive and casual environment which is conducive to friendly chat, rather than business or formal discussion.

Arabic hosts commonly offer their guests full course meals, with a variety of foods and beverages, such as Chai Tea or water.

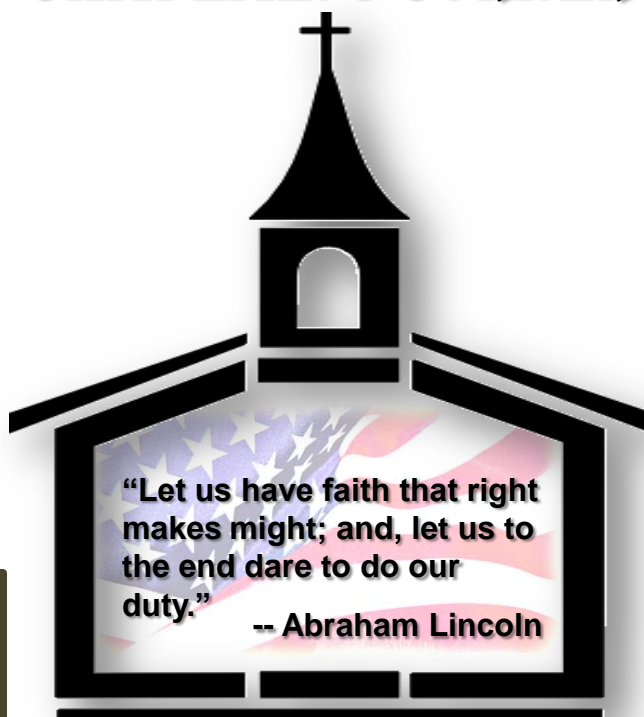
As a courtesy to their hosts, guests are recommended to partake of as much food as is offered by their hosts. A chef or host may become offended by a guest who does not eat a large amount of the food offered. This can be seen as not showing proper respect for their host or as disrespect.

Guests should feel free to accept any offering of their hosts. It is, in fact, best to eat and partake of more than they are comfortable with.

Following the meal, it is customary for guests to say "Sahtayn," which is Arabic for "two healths to you."

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CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



TASK FORCE LIGHTNING - THROUGH THE LENS



U.S. Army photos by Pfc. Jesus J. Aranda

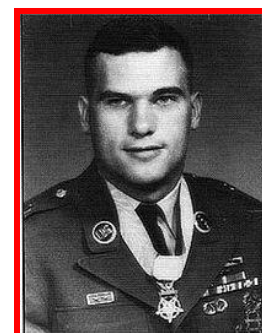
HONOR – As the U.S. Army prepares to celebrate the 234th anniversary of it's inception, Soldiers stationed worldwide continue to carry on the mission. The dedication to duty, honor and service are especially evident in the hearts, minds and bodies of Soldiers selflessly serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Modern day heroes, the efforts of today's Soldier directly reflect the same loyalty, respect, and personal courage as those of our Army's forefathers, and all Soldiers who have followed in their footsteps.

Do you have a great photo from your time serving OIF? We'd love to share it on "Through The Lens." Send your best photos to us at mndnpao@25id.army.mil

HEROES OF THE 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION



- Sgt. John F. Baker Jr.
- Company A, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division
- Born: October 30, 1945
- Entered Service: Moline, Illinois
- Place of Action: Near Quan Dau Tieng, Republic of Vietnam
- Date of Action: November 5, 1966



John F. Baker Jr.

Medal of Honor Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. En route to assist another unit that was engage with the enemy, Company A came under intense enemy fire and the lead man was killed instantly. Sgt. Baker immediately moved to the head of the column and together with another soldier knocked out two enemy bunkers. When his comrade was mortally wounded, Sgt. Baker, spotting four Viet Cong snipers, killed all of them, evacuated the fallen soldier and returned to lead repeated assaults against the enemy positions, killing several more Viet Cong. Moving to attack two additional enemy bunkers, he and another soldier drew intense enemy fire and Sgt. Baker was blown from his feet by an enemy grenade. He quickly recovered and single-handedly destroyed one bunker before the other soldier was wounded. Seizing his fallen comrade's machine-gun, Sgt. Baker charged through the deadly fusillade to silence the other bunker. He evacuated his comrade, replenished his ammunition and returned to the forefront to brace the enemy fire and continue the fight. When the forward element was ordered to withdraw, he carried one wounded man to the rear. As he returned to evacuate another soldier, he was taken under fire by snipers, but raced beyond the friendly troops to attack and kill the snipers. After evacuating the wounded man, he returned to cover the deployment of the unit. His ammunition now exhausted, he dragged two more of his fallen comrades to the rear. Sgt. Baker's selfless heroism, indomitable fighting spirit, and extraordinary gallantry were directly responsible for saving the lives of several of his comrades, and inflicting serious damage on the enemy. His acts were in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country.

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