

Monday,  
June 15, 2009  
Issue 15

# The Desert Raven



81<sup>st</sup> BCT Monthly Command Information Newsletter

## 81<sup>ST</sup> BCT GRIEVES THE LOSS OF ONE OF THEIR OWN



*In a memorial service on Al Taqaddum Airbase, Iraq June 6, 2009, Soldiers from 81<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team honored Spc. Samuel Stone of Charlie Company 1-303<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry, 81<sup>st</sup> BCT, who died serving his country May 31, 2009. See Page 3 for more. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)*

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## Message from 81<sup>st</sup> BCT Commander

*By Col. Ronald Kapral  
81<sup>st</sup> BCT commander*

I want to thank everyone for the tremendous efforts that you put forth each and every day. The 81<sup>st</sup> is making its mark on this country and you are performing your missions well. As we approach our end of mission and prepare to go home there are many more requirements that we must accomplish.

By now, many of you know the dates we are scheduled to conduct our transition of authority to the next unit.

Dates have been identified for our flights back to Fort McCoy. However, I want to caution you and your families and friends that those dates may change. We are going to make every attempt to get you home in the most expeditious manner, but this is a complicated move and things don't always go according to plan. I recommend to share the dates, but confirm them after you



get to McCoy and get the schedule for the departure.

We still have a lot of work to finish here. We have already set the stage for the next unit coming in. Now we must ensure that we are prepared to go home. This means the equipment must be maintained and packed and you have several requirements to complete before we leave. We need

to ensure that we attend all the required briefings and fill out all the required documents. Remember, the more we can complete here the less you will have to do at McCoy.

Medical and dental will be our primary focus at Fort McCoy. I want every Soldier to have the opportunity to get checked out by medical and dental professionals. It is extremely important if you had an injury here that we get that documented and in

your record. No one should leave active duty unless they are in perfect medical and dental health. I have heard comments that, "I am not going to put anything down because I don't want to spend any extra time at McCoy." You will not have to spend extra time at McCoy. Each

Soldier who has issues will be seen by a case manager and will be counseled and a program of care will be created. Most Soldiers will be sent to the nearest Army medical facility where they live. They will also give remote care, but that will be determined by the nature of the injury and the case worker. Each Soldier will still get the four-day pass and will spend time with their families and friends. If you have problems now this will be the time to get the attention you have earned and deserve.

The coming weeks will be tough. Everyone is thinking about home. Don't lose sight of our duty and responsibilities to each other. We need to push on just as hard as we did when we first arrived. Let all go home proud of our accomplishments and complete our mission.

## Message from 81<sup>st</sup> BCT Command Sergeant Major

*By Command Sgt. Maj.  
Robert Sweeney*

*81<sup>st</sup> BCT command sergeant major*

You know it was great feeling for me to say "I am out of here next month!" As great as that sounds I realize as a leader I am still in Iraq and still have a mission to accomplish. There is much work ahead in completing our current mission; preparing to move ourselves and our equipment home and welcoming our replacements and training them to take over our mission. Once all this is complete then we can shift focus to Fort McCoy and going home!

As you can see there is much to do and to accomplish all of this is going to require good leadership, teamwork and cooperation which I know

the Soldiers of this brigade exceed at.

As we enter into the final phase of operations I cannot emphasize enough about conducting all operations safely. Remember, you are all safety officers regardless of the rank on your uniform. If you see an unsafe act you are obligated to put a halt to it. There is nothing we are doing that we need to compromise safe practices. As Brig. Gen. Toney has



stated to us all "We need to finish strong," and I know you can.

Families and friends, you have been our unsung heroes from the beginning and throughout this deployment and I ask you all to hang in there just a bit longer for the end is near. I also need all of you to think of safety. With school ending soon and the 4th of July celebrations beginning there is potential at home for things to go wrong and I need each and every one

of you to look out for each other.

To everyone - take care, be safe and soon we will all be home!





# Emotional service for one of 81<sup>st</sup> Brigade's 'good ones'

By Scott Fontaine  
The News Tribune

Originally Published: 06/11/09 in  
The Tacoma News Tribune

**O**n the last night of his two-week leave from Iraq, Spc. Samuel D. Stone canceled his plans and rushed to the hospital when his sister broke her ankle.

It was a simple act of kindness, but one that family members said exemplified the Washington National Guard Soldier's generous and caring personality.

"You gave life and those around you everything you had," said his brother-in-law, Svend Sorensen, at Stone's funeral June 10 in Port Orchard, Wash.

Stone, who would have turned 21 June 10, was killed May 30 when his armored vehicle rolled during a convoy security mission in Iraq. Stone was only two months from finishing his yearlong deployment with the 81<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team. He belonged to the 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 303<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry Regiment.

Stone is the first casualty in the brigade since its 3,500 Soldiers deployed to Iraq last October and the first Washington Guardsman killed in a combat zone since April 2005.

The emotional service at First Lutheran Church drew a standing-room-only crowd of several hundred. The Patriot Guard Riders, a biker group that attends funerals of fallen service members, flanked the church with American flags. Inside, family members and friends sat beside Soldiers, sailors and airmen.

On the altar were a folded American flag, a battle cross and a poster of Stone wearing his cavalry Stetson and a serious look.

But those who eulogized Stone remembered him as a kind man with a sense of humor who enlisted because he wanted to serve his nation.

"Sam would laugh and laugh often," said the Rev. Angela Ying, one of two ministers at the funeral. "His

laugh was contagious."

Stone, who trained as a helicopter mechanic and had been assigned to the Washington National Guard's aviation unit, volunteered for the Iraq tour. Like much of the 81<sup>st</sup> Brigade, his deployment was spent primarily guarding supply convoys of contractor trucks as they drove between American bases.

He was in the gunner's hatch of an M1117 Armored Security Vehicle on a convoy from Al Taqaddum in central Iraq to Tallil in the southeast when it rolled. The incident wasn't combat-related; one other Soldier was injured.

"His fellow Soldiers would comment that no matter what the task was, he was always there," said Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond Jay, the top enlisted Soldier in Stone's squadron.

The funeral included hymns, readings and a video tribute. Brig. Gen. Gordon Toney, the commander of the Washington Army National Guard, awarded Stone five medals posthumously. An honor guard fired a rifle salute, taps was played and an American flag was presented to Stone's mother.

A teary-eyed Gov. Chris Gregoire, in her role as commander in chief



*Lt. Col. Michael Weitzel, the commanding officer of 1-303<sup>rd</sup> Cav. places his command coin next to Spc. Samuel Stone's boots during a memorial service held at Al Taqqadum Airbase, Iraq June 6, 2009. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)*



**SPC. SAMUEL STONE**

**JUNE 10, 1988 -  
MAY 31, 2009**

**C TRP. 1-303<sup>RD</sup> CAV.**


of the Washington National Guard, presented the family with a folded state flag.

Kevin Brooker, Stone's first sergeant, stood at attention after the service concluded.

He was home in Moses Lake on leave when he heard the news. He spent the past 10 days with the family, including escorting Stone's body off the plane at Dover Air Force Base, Del.

Brooker is typically quick with a joke. Not Wednesday afternoon.

"He was one of the good ones," Brooker said.

Stone is survived by his mother and father, a sister and two brothers. 

Soldiers of the 1-303<sup>rd</sup> Cav. and other 81<sup>st</sup> BCT units paid their respect to Spc. Samuel D. Stone in a memorial service held at Al Taqqadum Airbase, Iraq, June 6, 2009. During the service he was honored with a the traditional down-turned rifle boots and helmet.

<http://washingtonguard.org/fallenheroes/>





# June's featured NCO: Staff Sgt. Eric Hersey

By Sgt. Amanda Gauthier

81<sup>st</sup> BCT Public Affairs

**D**edication and commitment are two of the many values that every noncommissioned officer must possess. Staff Sgt. Eric Hersey took that to heart when he not only volunteered to deploy with 1-161<sup>st</sup> Infantry (Combined Arms Battalion), 81<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team, Washington Army National Guard in 2004, but also continued to drill with the 81<sup>st</sup> BCT following that deployment. What makes that remarkable is Hersey doesn't live in Washington State, in fact, his home is over 2,000 miles away in Chicago, where he works as a police sergeant.

Hersey has flown to Washington for his monthly drills since the brigade's return from deployment in 2005. He could have transferred to the Illinois National Guard but Hersey felt a sense of commitment to the unit he served with in Iraq.

"Since my 2005 return from the first deployment I have I flown in to Washington for drill," said Hersey. "We knew from the time we got back that we would go again and I wanted to stay with the same unit."

His demonstration of commitment to his country, the military and his family began when he joined in 1986. He took every course he could get into, air assault, pre-ranger school, and was eventually accepted into West Point Prep School in 1990. Unfortunately, he had to get out of the military due to family hardship. He went home to take care of his family, finish college and begin work as a police officer.

When the United States went to war with Iraq in 2003, Hersey decided it was time for him to get back into the military. He joined the Illinois National Guard and prepared to deploy with them to Afghanistan. While waiting to deploy he completed Airborne school and the Warrior Leader Course. The mobilization was eventually called off, but he still wanted to deploy. So he searched for a unit that was deploying. In 2004, he found himself in Washington State preparing to deploy with the 81<sup>st</sup> BCT. He spent the following year in Iraq with the 1-161<sup>st</sup> Inf. Battalion.

Following the Iraq deployment, Hersey graduated from Pathfinder course before returning to his family and job at the police department where he has since been promoted to acting lieutenant. He is now responsible for three sergeants, four detectives and 20 patrol officers.

Though he has been completely dedicated to his job and the military, he has not let that get in the way of him being a good father

and husband. Hersey has been married to his wife, Lisa, for 14 years and they have three children 11-year-old twins Ariel and Aleah and 6-year-old Eric Jr.

"Eric is a great father because he spends quality time with our three children," said Lisa. "He teaches them values and morals that will prepare them for the future. He is also a devoted husband who is very loving, caring, and giving."

He is just as proud of his family as they are of him.

"The only accomplishment that I am truly proud of is being a husband and father" said Hersey. "It may sound strange, but I look at the things that I have accomplished as a police officer and Soldier as a part of my duty to the respective services."

"I am proud of Eric for the so many wonderful things that he has done," said Lisa. "He came back to the Army after a long absence because of a strong sense of duty. He is a perfectionist who strives for excellence in every endeavor."

Hersey is currently in Iraq with Alpha Co., 1-161<sup>st</sup> Inf. (CAB) as a convoy commander for 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Shawn Powell. His leadership style is reflected in the way his seniors and subordinates rely on him.

"He is passionate about the Soldiers he is responsible for and this culminates in an eagerness to serve the United States and defend her against those that would destroy our way of life," said Powell. "He is a dependable NCO - one of my 'right hands' so to speak - and his contributions and sacrifices for this company are invaluable..... His Soldiers love him, they respond to his training, motivation and discipline and he exudes and communicates confidence in them."

He believes every NCO should be well rounded and the welfare of Soldiers comes first.

"There are many traits that make a good NCO, and most of them are directly linked to the Army values," he said. "In addition to those core values a good NCO must lead by example, be tactically and technically pro-



Staff Sgt. Eric Hersey sits next on the roof of one of the vehicles used during convoy security missions. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)



Staff Sgt. Eric Hersey, his wife Lisa and their children Ariel, Aleah and Eric Jr. prior to his deployment. (Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. Eric Hersey)

See HERSEY Page 13





# June's featured NCO: Sgt 1<sup>st</sup> Class Kelly Maglecic

By Sgt. Amanda Gauthier  
81<sup>st</sup> BCT Public Affairs

During the year of the Noncommissioned Officer we recognize what it takes to make a good leader and the crucial role they play in today's Army. Some of the qualities that make up a good NCO are hard work, dependability and resourcefulness. Both superiors and subordinates rely on their NCOs to not only complete the tasks they are given but to also set the example and teach future NCOs to do the same. Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Kelly Maglecic believes that good NCOs embody the "the be, know, do," and Army values.

Maglecic, a perimeter NCO with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2-146<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery and warehouse worker, served nine years on active duty. During his active duty time he served with the 2-5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in Fort Hood Tex., the 4-32<sup>nd</sup> Armor in Germany, the 2-23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry at Fort Lewis and then in Berlin with the 6-502<sup>nd</sup> Infantry. He left active duty in August 1993 and joined the Washington Army National Guard in October 1995 as a member of 2-146<sup>th</sup> FA and has deployed with them twice since.

The answers to everything we are confronted with in the military today are not always black and white. Often, NCOs must come up with resourceful ways to deal with situations. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Robert Newton, Maglecic's supervisor, has witnessed some creative solutions to some problems Maglecic faced.

"One project that stands out involved the placement of blast mitigation on the airfield," said Newton. "A wall [made up of Hercules Engineering Solutions Consortium (HESCO) barriers] over 18 feet in height was required to protect the tenants of the [Contingency Operating Base] from the possibility of a negligent discharge from Apache helicopters. The wall also served as indirect fire protection for the helicopters. When the requirements for the height of the wall exceeded the reach capability of the equipment he was utilizing, Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Maglecic improvised by placing compacted dirt at the base of the HESCOs to allow his equipment to reach higher. In an uncommon display of perseverance and will power, Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Maglecic and his three Soldiers emplaced over 680 HESCOs in 6 days."

That is just one example of Maglecic resourcefulness. He is often relied upon to come up with solutions to those kind of problems.

"His job requires coordinating with units and KBR in order to ensure that equipment and operators are where they need to be at any given time," Newton said. "It also requires some ingenuity when materials are not readily available and alternative solutions have to be

created. He takes great pride in his work as the Perimeter NCO and can be counted on to create solutions to any problems he encounters."

Even with the demands of the job he makes sure his Soldiers are prepared to step up and take the lead and take over his job in his absence.

"Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Maglecic believes in mentoring his Soldiers to become leaders," Newton said. "He has invested the time to prepare a newly promoted E-4 to fill his position as the Perimeter NCO so that

while Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Maglecic was on leave Spc. Abbott was able to step into a leadership role, directing Soldiers and implementing the necessary coordination and resourcefulness needed to seamlessly fill his position in his absence."

The skills he gained in the military have also helped him with his civilian job working in a warehouse for Albertson's.

His warehouse supervisor, Matt, said: "Kelly is always ready for anything. He is always willing to do anything with a positive attitude and a smile. He wants to continue learning anything he can. Kelly is a journeyman warehouseman who knows all critical job functions and can perform them at will. Kelly is a great asset to our team here at Albertson's, a real team player with a positive attitude and a 'get it done' mindset."

Maglecic and his wife of 20 years, Christine have raised three children together Johnathon 17, Stacia 19, and Anthony Licerio 20. He has always put his family first but is completely dedicated to the his military career and his family stands behind him.

Christine said, "I'm a career Army wife and Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Kelly Maglecic is a good father because no matter where he is, home or away, his children come first. Family sustains him to complete his mission. I am proud of him because he loves the military and has given 100 percent for over 20 years of service. He gives that much when he is home with his kids."



Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Maglecic  
(Photo courtesy of 2-146<sup>th</sup> FA)



Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Kelly Maglecic stands alongside some the third country nationals hired to work during a barrier emplacement mission in November. (Photo courtesy of HHB, 2-146<sup>th</sup> FA)



# 1-161<sup>st</sup> Soldier meets President Obama

By Chuck Roberts

Landstuhl Regional Medical Center Public Affairs

The commander in chief focused his attention on wounded warriors during a June 5 visit to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

President Barack Obama paid bedside visits with U.S. and coalition servicemembers as well as joining an enthusiastic crowd of outpatients at the USO Warrior Center.

Along the way he pinned on six Purple Hearts honoring servicemembers injured in Afghanistan and Iraq. Among those in the packed Warrior Center was Washington Army National Guard Pfc. Dean Baker, an 18-year-old injured in an improvised explosive device blast while deployed to Iraq with the 161<sup>st</sup> Inf.ntry (Combined Arms Battalion).

His reaction to meeting President Obama echoed those of many. "It was really cool just to be in the presence of a leader like that," Baker said. "People started walking in [to the Warrior Center] and I'm like, 'Oh my God, it's the president.' You're never going to get that chance again unless you're really lucky."

Baker said it was an honor just to be in the presence of such a powerful man, especially on an occasion where the president came to honor those who were injured in the service of their country.

Leading the president during his visit to an inpatient ward was Army 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Danielle Schaaf, a nurse who said his impact on the wounded warriors was visibly noticeable.

"He was so kind to all the Soldiers and so sincere, and really took their stories and what they were saying personally," Schaaf said. "It really meant a lot to the Soldiers. You could just tell on their faces they were very impressed. He was happy to see them and they were happy to see him."

The 24-year-old nurse said she shared those feeling at the chance of meeting and escorting the commander in chief.

"It was an honor," Schaaf said. "It was a complete honor to see him. He welcomed the staff and was so happy to see everyone. It was incredible."

Also in attendance at the Warrior Center was Marine Lance Cpl. Casey Nowlin, who sustained injuries during an IED blast in Iraq and is currently receiving treatment at LRMC while staying at the nearby Medical Transient Detachment. The 19-year-old Marine, assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Marines, also remarked on the privilege of meeting the commander in chief.

"It was intense meeting him," said the native of Tucson, Ariz. "I didn't realize he was that tall."

"He was very kind spoken and it was nice meeting him. It was definitely a spirit uplifting event. Although I wasn't in the intensive care unit area, I bet it would have definitely had a huge effect on their morale. But I know it's also important to my fellow Marines, Airmen, Soldiers and Sailors that he was here. It was definitely an experience you would never forget." 🐾



Pfc. Dean Baker of the Washington Army National Guard (center) shakes the hand of President Barack Obama, who recently visited troops at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center. Baker was injured in an improvised explosive device blast while deployed to Iraq with the 161<sup>st</sup> Inf. (CAB). His reaction to meeting President Obama echoed those of many. (Photo courtesy of Pfc. Dean Baker)

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# CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

By Lt. Col. Carl Steele  
81<sup>st</sup> BCT Chaplain

**M**any of us are thinking about heading home. When we prepared to leave Fort McCoy for Iraq, The Raven had an article on preparing to leave. In that article it compared a spouse or loved one leaving on deployment to a person jumping out of a canoe. Now that we are thinking about redeployment, what will things be like when we get home? The majority of Soldiers and families will have a smooth transition. When we left we were jumping out of the canoe and leaving our families to go it alone. Now we are about to swim back to the canoe and pull ourselves in. Everybody is excited about the reunion and you should be.


There will be many people there to help us get back into the canoe. Our spouse, children, parents, and friends all want to help us with the transition. As you make your way back you may be asking yourself, where will I fit in. What changes have been made that I need to be aware of? Children change over the year, your spouse changes, the people at your job change. A lot has happened since you have been gone. As those who want to help start to pull you into the canoe worry about how much you may have changed. It takes a lot of work to pull someone back into a canoe. It takes



work to readjust back into the family. Begin the communication process now. What are some of the changes?

As everyone is trying to pull you in they may have to make adjustments themselves. A son that has been "the man of the house" now has to go back to being the son. He may enjoy mowing the lawn and you may have to negotiate what stays the same and

what changes. As your spouse pulls they may see the changes that they enjoy and worry about how you will react or they may be excited to get your help in some areas. Get in slowly and you will make less of a mess.

Once back in the canoe you can help to keep things going. Make sure that you and your family are in paddling together or you will be stuck going in circles. If you need help getting things together, use the resources that are available, Military One Source, the VA, Chaplain and Family Life Consultants. 

## Career and Employment Opportunities

By Ken Schwarm  
Deployment Cycle Support, Yellow Ribbon Program

**N**ow that you are reaching the end of your mobilization, your career and employment concerns may be entering your mind. The J9 has worked tirelessly for apprentice programs with many trade unions. Additionally, we have arranged a partnership with the Employment Services Department. These opportunities have been worked to ensure those that would like a Career change or employment can apply. For those who have completed the Personal Assessment, your packages are already being processed. If you were provided the Employment Readiness Scale (ERS) and World of Work Inventory (WOWI) please complete at your earliest convenience.


The J9 exists especially to help military servicemen and women

who are coming back from deployments to reintegrate back into their local communities.

Soldiers sometimes need assistance or guidance concerning health and employment issues, which the directorate strives to support. The Washington

National Guard's J9 Directorate is also known as the "Warriors, Veterans, and Family Readiness Service Support Directorate."

If you find that you or your immediate

family member's employment situation changes from now until you return, please feel free to contact Morgan Zantua at 253-512-8540 or [morgan.zantua@us.army.mil](mailto:morgan.zantua@us.army.mil) 



## DID YOU KNOW...

- The National Guard is the oldest military organization in the United States. It is 139 years older than the U.S. Army.
- At the peak of the recovery effort following Hurricane Katrina, more than 51,000 Army and Air Guard members were involved.
- Fifty percent of the Army's ground combat units in Iraq in 2005 were from the National Guard.
- 62,411 Army and 10,456 Air National Guard members were mobilized in 1990-1991 for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.
- The first woman to join the Guard was Captain Norma Parsons of the New York Air National Guard in 1956.



# Support company takes on the road

By Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier  
81<sup>st</sup> BCT Public Affairs

The majority of the Soldiers in Bravo Company, 181<sup>st</sup> Brigade Support Battalion, a maintenance company with the 81<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team out of Yakima Wash., are mechanics, cooks and other non-combat military occupational specialties (MOS). In fact only a few in the company are combat arms. Yet, shortly into their one-year mobilization the company learned they would conduct convoy security missions



Sgt. Michelle Brown, a mechanic and a truck commander assigned to B Co. 181<sup>st</sup> BSB, 81<sup>st</sup> BCT, completes radio checks on her vehicle in preparation for a convoy escort mission May 29, 2009. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)

in Iraq. This was positive news for many Bravo Company Soldiers. The company had originally been scheduled to do base security, manning towers and gates.

"They were pretty excited about it. A lot of them didn't want to be on gates," Master Sgt. Joel Courner, the acting first sergeant for B Co. 181<sup>st</sup> BSB said about the reaction to hearing of their new duty. "The

guys who had been here before that had worked on the gates here, they know what it was like and didn't really like doing that. This gave them something different to do. They like being on gun trucks and being out on the road. They've learned a lot and they've grown a lot. So it's been a good experience for them, I think they are going to be a lot more confident with their lives. Just knowing the things they can do, the thing they can accomplish."

Sgt. Lee Branson got out of the Airforce in 2008 but had been considering getting back in the military when a friend mentioned he was being mobilized with the 1-161<sup>st</sup> Inf. (Combat Arms Battalion), 81<sup>st</sup> BCT. That was all it took for Branson to make the decision to join the Army National Guard as a communications specialist. He joined in just enough time to complete a warrior transition course and catch up with B Co. 181<sup>st</sup> BSB during the mobilization training. It wasn't long into that training he discovered he was going to be a truck commander conduction convoy escorts.

"When I signed my contract I signed for communications, but I was kind of told that the Army takes people and puts them wherever they need them. The needs of the Army come first, and I can understand that. [Finding out about our mission] was a big surprise to me, didn't know until the day I joined the unit on [mobilization] day that we were going to have a combat arms mission and we were going to be doing convoy security. I had never driven a HMMWV before training at Fort McCoy. I wound up having a master driver above me who got me trained up on all of the vehicles. Now I love it. I love the work."



Command Sgt. Maj Robert Sweeney chats with Pfc. Thomas Lizama, Spc. Joseph Martin and Sgt. Todd Stoddard from B Co. 181<sup>st</sup> BSB at JBB, Iraq May 29, 2009. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)

When Spc. Morena Charron joined the National Guard in May 2006 to become an automated logistical specialist, she was only 17 years old. She graduated from her advanced individual training in April 2008, which gave her just enough time to go to one drill before the 2008 annual training and mobilization. She expected to be in a supply room or an office but she found out during her pre-deployment training she would be a gunner on one of the convoy security vehicles.

"I was nervous and excited and I  
See CONVOY Page 23



Spc. Lorena A. Charron of Yakima, Wash., from B Co. 181<sup>st</sup> BSB displays her General's Coin she was awarded for her dedication and service as an MRAP gunner. (Photo by Capt. Mike Vincent)





# Post-Deployment Healthcare Benefits



## TRS - Tricare Reserve Select

Healthcare coverage under TRS is similar to TRICARE Standard and Extra. It includes deductibles, cost-shares and a \$1,000 cap on the fiscal year maximum out-of-pocket expenses for covered medical services.

TRS enrollees, individuals and family members have the freedom to access care from any TRICARE-authorized, certified or network provider or hospital.

They also may request care at a military treatment facility on a space-available basis. A network provider directory is available under the beneficiary section of [www.triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com).

TRS enrollees have TRICARE pharmacy benefits and the option to purchase dental coverage.

The TRICARE pharmacy program is administered by Express Scripts, Inc. ([www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE](http://www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE)) and has minimal co-payments. The pharmacy program is tied to TRICARE medical coverage so it doesn't require a separate enrollment fee or monthly premium to use the benefits.


Dental coverage may be purchased through the TRICARE Dental Program administered by United Concordia Companies, Inc. ([www.tricaredentalprogram.com](http://www.tricaredentalprogram.com)).

For more about TRS visit [www.TRICARE.mil/trs](http://www.TRICARE.mil/trs).

## Medical Retirement

The injured, ill and those with a physical condition are eligible for TRICARE retirement benefits, along with their eligible family members, if they are registered and show eligible on DEERS (Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System) and have a disability rating of 30 percent or greater. Less than 30 percent could mean involuntary separation from active duty.

The medically retired also have Veterans Administration benefits and service connected disability care is free. Veterans may choose between TRICARE and VA care, but TRICARE coverage could require payments.

For more information visit TriWest's Guard and Reserve Resource Center at [www.triwest.com/ngr](http://www.triwest.com/ngr). For eligibility questions, see a Reserve Component point of contact ([www.defenselink.mil/ra/html/tricare.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/ra/html/tricare.html)). 

By Richard Gray  
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

**M**ilitary healthcare is available to 81<sup>st</sup> BCT Soldiers and families while troops make the transition to civilian life and between deployments. There are two stages of healthcare coverage.

First is TAMP — the Transitional Assistance Management Program. It provides 180 days of TRICARE healthcare benefits after deactivation. For care beyond those 180 days, drilling National Guard members have the option to buy TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) for themselves and their families at affordable rates.

"These are unique programs in the history of military healthcare," said Joe Nortz, Guard and Reserve Liaison Director for TriWest Healthcare Alliance. "They are designed to provide a continuum of care during the busy, and sometimes tough, reintegration period and between deployments."

## TAMP - Transitional Assistance Management Program

When 81<sup>st</sup> members step on their home grounds this summer, the TAMP benefit offering the fee-free TRICARE Prime plan can begin. Service members and their families need to enroll within the 180-day period of separation from active duty.

Enroll online using the Beneficiary Web Enrollment Web site at <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/bwe/> or contact TriWest Healthcare Alliance at 1-888-TRIWEST for assistance.

Those who choose not to enroll in TRICARE Prime will automatically have TRICARE Standard and Extra during the 180-day transition period. This plan has cost shares — patients pay between 15 and 20 percent of what TRICARE allows — unless care is provided by a military hospital or clinic.

Those living in rural areas should note that TRICARE Prime Remote is not available under TAMP's transitional coverage, but care will be provided by Standard and Extra.

## What's next?

After the transitional 180 days of coverage, 81<sup>st</sup> BCT members may move to the Tricare Reserve Select healthcare plan designed especially for National Guard and Reserve members. Members who have coverage under the Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan, such as a federal technician, are not eligible for TRS.

## About TriWest

TriWest Healthcare Alliance partners with the Department of Defense to do "Whatever It Takes" to support the healthcare needs of 2.7 million members of America's military Family. A Phoenix-based corporation, TriWest provides access to cost-effective, high-quality health care in the 21-state TRICARE West Region. Visit [www.triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com) for more information.



*Ninewa Provincial Governor Altheel al-Najafi discusses the future of Iraqi air traffic control in Mosul with Marez Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Jeff Sabatine from the operations deck of the new Mosul Tower. (Photo by Sgt. Virgil Akins)*

## 2-146<sup>th</sup> FA turns over Air Traffic Control Tower

*By Sgt. Virgil Akins*

2-146<sup>th</sup> FA

The Mayor's Cell of Contingency Operating Base Marez, Task Force 146, a detachment of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery 2-146<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, turned over control of the completed Mosul International Airport Air Traffic Control Tower to the Governor of Nineveh Province, Atheel al-Najafi, in June 2009.

On June 2, 2009 the Provincial Governor visited and inspected Mosul's new air traffic control tower. The tower is part of the \$14 million greater Airfield Project, which also included renovations to the civilian terminal on site. The project was started in 2006, and the terminal



*Lt. Col. Jeff Sabatine and Marez Airfield manager Chief Warrant Officer David 'Bat' Masterson discuss the integration of U.S. and Iraqi air traffic control operations at the new Iraqi Air Traffic Control Tower on COB Marez. (Photo by Sgt. Virgil Akins)*


saw its first domestic operations supporting the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca in December 2008. The tower has been unoccupied since its completion in 2007 but Governor al-Najafi has committed to working with the Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority and supporting the expansion of flight operations here.

Representing the Task Force at the dedication were Lt. Col. Jeffrey Sabatine, COB Marez Commander, Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Morgan, COB Marez command sergeant major, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Eric Sandland, Mayor's Cell first sergeant and Maj. Jack Mushallo, Base Defense Operations Center officer in charge. Also present at the event was Chief Warrant Officer David "Bat" Masterson, Mosul Airfield OIC and the safety officer from the 10<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade, Hasan Rashid, the Mosul Director of the ICAA, and Hushyar Aziz, U.S. Department of State, Nineveh Provincial Reconstruction Team.



*Lt. Col. Jeff Sabatine and Ninewa Provincial Governor Altheel al-Najafi shake hands after the Governor's inspection of his new Air Field Control Tower on June 2, 2009 (Photo by Sgt. Virgil Akins)*

Originally an Iraqi Military Air Force Base, the airfield on COB Marez has been in use by the U.S. Military since beginning of the 2003 war. As part of the Status of Forces Agreement between the US and Iraq, the airfield is being rebuilt and will be returned to the ICAA for use as a civilian international airport. Construction on the terminal and tower, as well as updated training for Iraqi air traffic controllers has been an up and down struggle of logistics and personnel for nearly three years. This hand over event shows that the challenges are nearly overcome.

"Governor al-Najafi's interest in this facility is a clear indication of the commitment of the Iraqi government to increase their capabilities in Nineveh," Sabatine said. "We are very happy to support this hand-over." According to Masterson, the U.S. has been working hand in hand with the ICAA to update training materials and strategies for the air traffic controllers that will be moving in to make the Mosul International Airport operational. The ICAA is Iraq's version of the FAA and will ultimately be charged with overseeing all civilian flights operating in Iraqi airspace. 





# Military Equal Opportunity

By Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Sheletha Quillin  
81<sup>st</sup> BCT Equal Opportunity Advisor

**E**qual Opportunity is the right of every servicemember, DoD civilian or dependent to be treated with respect based on their merit instead of their color, national origin, race, religion or gender; and to work in an environment free from sexual harassment.



**Everyone can support the Equal Opportunity Policy** by setting a good example, making on-the-spot corrections vs. ignoring violations, considering if the behavior would be offensive if directed at your loved ones and seeking assistance to resolve issues before they escalate into serious problems.

**If you have questions or concerns about EO you should contact Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Sheletha D. Quillin**, Camp Ramadi EO Advisor and Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, DSN 344-0932 VoSIP 696-5171 [sheletha.quillin@ar.mnf-wiraq.usmc.mil](mailto:sheletha.quillin@ar.mnf-wiraq.usmc.mil).

"Sometimes the only difference between a weed and a flower is perception." 🌻

## Guard retirement guide published

By Laura Paul  
From the Human Resources Policy Directorate G-1

**T**he Army has published a 56-page retirement guide for National Guard Soldiers and their families which covers subjects ranging from retirement point credits to how to apply for retirement pay.

The Army National Guard Information Guide on Non-Regular Retirement was a collaboration between the Army G-1 retirement services division and the National Guard.

"We published this guide as part of our efforts to ensure that National Guard Soldiers and their families receive the Army's full support before and after retirement," said John Radke, chief of Army G-1 retirement services.

"We see the commitment of National Guard Soldiers at home as they respond to disasters like Hurricane Katrina and abroad as they help fight those who seek to destabilize and destroy countries like Iraq and Afghanistan," Radke added. "We respond to their commitment by providing them with this retirement guide as they begin to plan for retirement from our great Army."

The guide is currently being distributed throughout the Guard. It is also available online at: <http://www.armyg1.army.mil/retire>. 🌻

## Church Bulletin Bloopers

(taken from actual church bulletins)

This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Brown to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.

Our youth basketball team is back in action Wednesday at 8 PM in the recreation hall. Come out and watch us kill Christ the King.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new tithing campaign slogan last Sunday "I Upped My Pledge - Up Yours."

The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled due to a conflict.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, superb entertainment, and gracious hostility.

Attend and you will hear an excellent speaker and have a healthy lunch.

Don't miss this Saturday's exhibit by Christian Martian Arts.





# *The Washington Adjutant General's Militia Ball*

*5p.m. Nov. 14, 2009*

*Double Tree Hotel Seattle Airport*

*18740 International Blvd, Seattle, WA 98188*

*Hotel reservations 1-206-246-8600*

*Room rates \$104 - ask for the "Militia Ball" rate*

*Tickets:*

*E1-E4: \$45*

*E5-E6: \$50*

*E7-E8 and W1-W3: \$60*

*O1-O3 and civilians: \$60*

*E9 and W4-W5: \$65*

*O4-O6: \$65*

*O7 and above: \$80*

*(Prices go up \$10 each after Oct. 15, 2009)*

Mrs. Vicki L. Fraga  
vicki.fraga@us.army.mil  
253-512-8205

CW4 Rita Vacek  
Rita.vacek@us.army.mil  
253-512-8444

MSgt. Leslie Acton  
leslie.acton@us.army.mil  
253-512-8347

Ms. Connie Marler  
connie.marler@us.army.mil  
253-512-8205

*Attire: Mess dress, dress blues, formal evening wear, or Army Class A w/ white shirt and bowtie/ Air- Service dress w/ bowtie*





# 1-185<sup>th</sup> Ar. (CAB) Soldiers take it to the ring

By 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. David Taliaferro  
B Co. 1-185<sup>th</sup> Ar. (CAB)

**S**pc. James Smalls, native of Hacienda Heights, Calif., assigned to Bravo Co., 1-185<sup>th</sup> Ar. (Combined Arms Battalion), fought his way to victory during the Contingency Operating Base Speicher Smoker Boxing match against one of COB Summerall's finest Soldier-boxers, June 5, 2009.



*Spc. James Smalls checks in with his boxing coach Spc. Federico Jimenez during the Smoker boxing match held on COB Speicher June 5, 2009. (Photo courtesy of 1-185<sup>th</sup> Ar. (CAB))*

Indeed logic might suggest that after long hours escorting vehicles down service routes laden with improvised explosive devices and small arms fire that these Soldiers might want to kick back and relax a little bit. These two apparently missed that period of instruction and have since pushed themselves both physically and mentally to achieve great personal goals.

When asked about his dedication to training, Small said, "Being in shape has always been important to me and the competition makes it that much more rewarding."

Smalls has truly been a competitor by dominating

Sore muscles, buckets of sweat, and hours of time in the gym have been part of the daily routine for Smalls and his trainer, Spc. Federico Jimenez, a native of Carlsbad, Calif., assigned to B Co 1-185<sup>th</sup> Ar. (CAB). Smalls has spent his down time in Iraq training for and participating in the COB Speicher Boxing Smokers while Jimenez has assisted in coaching the entire COB Speicher Boxing Team, including Smalls.

both bouts he has participated in.




*Spc. James Smalls of B Co 1-158<sup>th</sup> Ar. (CAB) California National Guard, takes on his competitor from COB Summerall in a Smoker Boxing match held on COB Speicher June 5, 2009. (Photo courtesy of 1-185<sup>th</sup> Ar. (CAB))*

both bouts he has participated in.

Jimenez was not allowed to participate as a member of the boxing squad because of his experience as a licensed boxer. Regardless, Jimenez was not going to be denied an opportunity to contribute.

Jimenez said, "Although I am not in the ring fighting, at least I can take pride in the fact that the guys I trained are going in there and coming out on top."

The most recent boxing event was a landside victory for the COB Speicher boxing team as it pummeled their neighbors from COB Summerall. It is truly a testament to the coaching and motivation provided by Jimenez.


The grind continues for Smalls and Jimenez as they balance their workouts and missions. The dedication they have shown is a reflection of their character and deserves noteworthy praise. These two Soldiers have done an excellent job representing themselves as well as the 1-185<sup>th</sup> Ar. (CAB). 

## HERSEY Continued from page 4

ficient and truly care for the Soldier's welfare. A good NCO is truly concerned for the welfare of his or her subordinates."

The year of the NCO has given all Soldiers a chance to recognize the importance of the NCO who serve not just as authorities in their field of work, but also as mentors, leaders and teachers for future NCOs.

"We serve not just as leaders, but also as the example of professional the Soldier that lower enlisted should emulate," said Hersey. "Recognizing The Year of the NCO gives us an opportunity to focus on the importance of the job of the NCO. It helps us to realize how important true mentoring of lower enlisted Soldiers is, so that we can ensure that quality NCO's are brought into the ranks."

Hersey plans to retire from his job as a police officer, relocate to Washington State and continue to serve in the Washington National guard. 



*Staff Sgt. Eric Hersey (Fourth from the left on the bottom row) and the other Soldiers in his platoon May 29, 2009. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)*





# THE RAVEN GALLERY



During a memorial service for Spc. Samuel Stone held on Al Taqaddum Airbase, Iraq, Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Edwards, A Trp., 1-303rd Cav., plays taps following the 21-gun salute. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)



Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Sweeney gives Spc. Gerson Matute a coin for excellence and shakes his hand while visiting COB Speicher June 31, 2009. Matute is slated to become a U.S. citizen in a ceremony July 4, 2009. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)



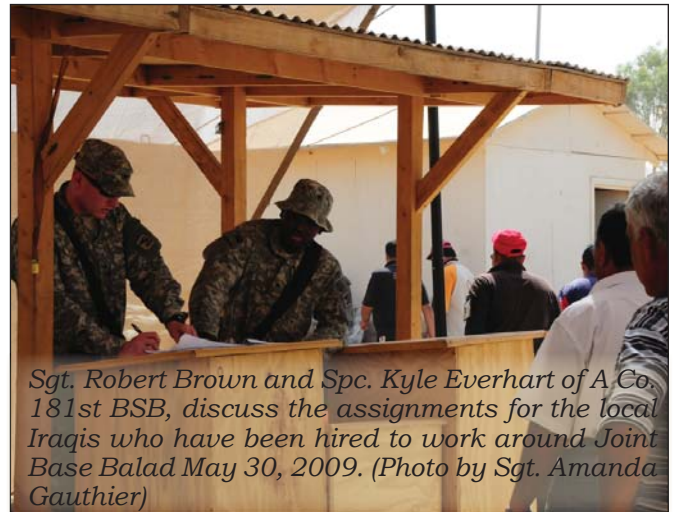
Sgt. Nathan Long from 1-185th Ar. (CAB) loosens bolts on a vehicle he is working on on COB Speicher, Iraq June 31, 2009. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)



Staff Sgt. Kristina Little and Staff Sgt. Beau Froelich, of 81st BTB stationed out of Everett, Wash., the two newest promoted NCO's, display the "Year of the NCO" cake made for the occasion. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kirsten Froelich)



Brig. Gen. Gordon Toney the former Assistant Adjutant General for the Washington Army National Guard, Lt. Col. Jeffery Sabatine and Maj. Jack Mushallo both from 2-146th FA pause in front of 2-146th FA's sign on on FOB Marez June 26, 2009. (Photo by Lt. Col. James North)



Sgt. Robert Brown and Spc. Kyle Everhart of A Co. 181st BSB, discuss the assignments for the local Iraqis who have been hired to work around Joint Base Balad May 30, 2009. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)





# Newly Commissioned LT's: Ready to Lead in War, Someday Peace

By 2nd Lt. Nick Stuart  
Officer Recruiter

Every year a new graduating class of officers commission and begin their initial duty assignments within the 81<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team. Most new Lieutenants initially serve as Platoon Leaders in one of the Brigade's five major Battalions. What is unique about the current generation of junior officers is that many in the 81<sup>st</sup> BCT went directly from the university or Officer Candidate School to their Basic Officer Leadership Courses to becoming Platoon Leaders in Iraq—some for a second tour. Like those who enlisted post 9-11, these Second Lieutenants entered their commissioning programs knowing that they may someday see the War on Terror first-hand. They look forward to the challenge of leading their platoons, some in combat. Each has worked hard to get where they are, but their paths haven't all been the same.

Meet 2nd Lt. Mike McCarthy of Alpha Company 1-161<sup>st</sup> Inf. a recent OCS graduate and veteran of the 81<sup>st</sup> Brigade's previous Iraq deployment. McCarthy served as a Sergeant, fire team leader in Baghdad during OIF II. Today he faces the challenges of making the transition to serving as an officer and leading his platoon.

When asked why he chose to commission, McCarthy answers, "I have always taken on leadership positions; in childhood, in high school and college sports, in my teaching profession, and since I joined the military in 1998--most recently as an Infantry Team Leader and Squad/Section Leader." He adds, "I also chose to pursue a commission to 'strengthen the force.' As an enlisted Soldier in the Army National Guard, I rarely saw Junior officers...there was a great shortage."

McCarthy, a middle school math teacher, enrolled in the Traditional OCS program in July 2007 and commissioned in August 2008. From



2nd Lt. Mike McCarthy. (Photo by Sgt. Michael McCausland)

there he went on to complete Basic Officer Leadership Courses I and II at Fort Benning, Ga. before meeting up with his platoon in Balad last April.

## Furthering a Career

Like McCarthy, many experienced enlisted Soldiers choose to further their career by entering into Officer Candidate School (OCS). OCS is an intensive three phased program that teaches leadership fundamentals through a light Infantry model. The Washington Army National Guard offers two versions of OC: Traditional and Accelerated. Traditional OCS is a 13-month, part-time program. It begins with a two week annual training in July followed by a year of monthly drill weekends, and culminates with a two week field training exercise the following summer. Another option is Accelerated OCS. The Accelerated program is a 57-day active duty school designed for the most experienced Officer Candidates. Accelerated OCS allows a Candidate to complete all three phases back to back and commission in as little as two months. In both programs, Candidates are evaluated in leadership roles ranging from squad leader

to company commander, complete multiple academic exams, and are challenged physically and mentally throughout.

Fred Ramey, currently an officer candidate, is gearing up for the final field training exercise in July. He has spent the last year in the Traditional OCS program and will commission this coming August.

When asked why he chose OCS, Candidate Ramey replies, "I chose OCS [because it] allowed me to start right away, and get my commission even if I finish OCS a few months before I get my bachelors." OCS allows Soldiers to commission with 90 semester credits or about a year short of their Bachelor's degree. Ramey is still awaiting his branch and unit as-

see *OFFICERS* page 25

## Washington Army National Guard ARMY ROTC

- ♦ Central WA University
- ♦ Eastern WA University

Spokane Falls CC

- ♦ Gonzaga University

Whitworth University

- ♦ Pacific Lutheran University

CWU Tacoma-Pierce College

Pierce CC-Steilacoom

St. Martins University

Tacoma CC-University Place

University of Puget Sound

UW-Tacoma

- ♦ Seattle University

- ♦ University of WA

Northwest University

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- ♦ WA State University

- Scholarships Available!
- Commission as an Officer!
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<http://officer.washingtonarmyguard.org>





*Pvt. Joshua Garza and Spc. James Dunn, both members of the 81<sup>st</sup> BCT and Camp Ramadi Mayor's Cell, guide one of two boxes full of civilian clothing on to a truck May 12, 2009. (Photo by Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)*



## Giving back: 81<sup>st</sup> BCT donates unclaimed clothes to locals

*By Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier  
81<sup>st</sup> BCT Public Affairs*

The Camp Ramadi Mayor's Cell lost and found and laundry point had a collection of clothing that had been sitting around unclaimed for months. After sorting out all military clothing, the Mayor's Cell still had two shipping container boxes, approximately 4 feet by 4 feet, full of abandoned civilian attire they didn't know what to do with. They were hoping to give it to people who could use it but did not have any community contacts.

Marine Capt. Rose Griffith, the Assistant Iraqi Women's Engagement Officer for Provincial Reconstruction Team, heard from a colleague that the Mayor's Cell was trying to get rid of unwanted clothing. She contacted them and proposed giving the clothes to the Alsuraa Association for Orphans and Widows in Ar Ramadi. Griffith gained contacts around Ramadi, working with civil affairs during her last deployment. She contacted her friend, an Iraqi woman who runs the association, and let her know about the clothes.

Alsuraa is a nongovernmental organization that helps out families in need, most of which are widows and or-



*Pvt. Joshua Garza and Spc. James Dunn, both members of the 81<sup>st</sup> BCT and Camp Ramadi Mayor's Cell, stand with the Iraqi volunteer who picked up the donated clothing to be distributed to needy Iraqis May 12, 2009. (Photo by Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)*

phans. The woman who runs Alsuraa was eager to receive the clothing and distribute them to needy families. The association already had a list of families who were in need of clothes before they were contacted by Griffith.

"She is always excited to get anything from us," said Griffith about the woman who runs Alsuraa.

The clothing will really help out the needy widows in the area. When the Iraqi women's husband met with Griffith and two members of the 81<sup>st</sup> Brigade Com-

bat Team, Washington Army National Guard and the Mayor's Cell to pick up the clothing May 12, 2009, he thanked the Camp for the clothing.





# USO Volunteers – Real American Patriots

By Capt. Mike Vincent  
HHC, 1-161<sup>st</sup> Inf. (CAB)

Staff Sgt. Alicia M. Chivers of Hotel Company 1-161<sup>st</sup> Inf. (Combined Arms B) had just spent 15 wonderful days of Rest and Recuperation with her family in Spokane, Wash. and was now returning back to Iraq. As she entered the DFW International Airport, she took one last breath of freedom before walking into the military assistance terminal. She was already delayed by her connecting flight through Seattle and was now in the back of a very long and silent line of Soldiers from R & R.

Luckily, USO volunteers were there handing out free drinks and hand-made neck pillows to make the long flight back tolerable. As some of the volunteers assisted her in marking her bags, she noticed the line was moving and hurried to get in. Another hour had passed standing in the digital camouflage maze of US service members. Finally, the last turn had arrived and then an announcement: "The last Soldier for tonight's flight has now checked in. The rest of you will have to return tomorrow. The 16 of you are stamped in and now under military regulations." The frustration had returned. "You will be transported to a hotel for the night and you must report back for tomorrow's flight," said Major Patrick McAfee of the Dallas-Fort Worth Military Personnel Assistance Point.

Soon, the remaining 16 Soldiers were flooded with thoughts of home and why they had returned so soon to sit, depressed, in a strange hotel room and wait. Just then, an older gentleman approached. "My name is Bert Brady of the USO's Operation Send Off. We are looking for a few volunteers willing to join the folks of Grand Prairie, Texas for a little dinner and appreciation for all the hard work y'all do for us. Any takers?" Chivers, was a little reluctant. But after a little coaxing by her travel buddies, she decided to go.

At 7:30 p.m., two empty vans pulled up to the hotel and Maj. Patrick McAfee and Sergeant Major Victor Allen of the Military Assistance Command stepped out of the vans. Chuck Lechner of Plano, Texas; a USO volunteer brought additional truck for any other additional Soldiers who may have had a change of heart. All of the returning R&R Soldiers, still in their duty uniforms jumped in. After a brief stop at the hotel to drop off their bags, they were off to the races! Really!

As the vans approached the Grand Prairie city limits, they were met by a motorized police escort. All traffic stopped in Grand Prairie. Citizens honked their horns and flashed lights in salute as the USO motorcade passed through town; filled with the 16 awe-struck Soldiers.

"I was really shocked to know that there were so many people out there that support us and will go to great lengths to show their support," Chivers said.

The USO entourage arrived at Lone Star Park at Grand Prairie, a professional horse racing track and entertainment center. They were met at the gates by country singer Norma Valles and her husband Alphonzo from Dallas, local restaurateur David Albert also from



*The USO R&R group posing for a photo in the Winners Circle of Lone Star Park in Grand Prairie, Tex. (Photo courtesy of (Staff Sgt. Alicia M. Chivers)*

Dallas, Caryn Ochoa and the president of Lone Star Park, Drew Shubeck from Grand Prairie, Texas.

"They are all huge supporters of the USO and the events we put together for the returning service members," said Bert Brady. "Norma and David own a restaurant together in the Dallas-Fort. Worth area and each month donate 50 percent of one days receipts to the USO and the Dear American Hero organization in support of the Soldiers overseas."

The group was led to the suite level of the park where a five-star buffet awaited them prepared by the park president's personal chef.

"The food was awesome! It was really great that all of these people did this for us. It was a pleasant surprise," said Chivers. "The Texas hospitality was extraordinary. Everything from the police escort, to the greeting at the gate and dinner was just wonderful."

To kick off the races, the group was led to the Winner's Circle where they were honored for their service and sacrifice by singer Norma Valles and the guests of Lone Star Park with the singing of the National Anthem. Afterward, the Soldiers enjoyed dinner, desert and the races from their seats in the presidents' private suite.

Before the sixth race, the group was invited back down to the Winner's Circle and the park announcer introduced each Soldier. They announced that the sixth race will be dedicated as "The US Military Mile" in honor of the Soldier's service and sacrifice to the nation.

For their efforts and generosity to the returning Soldiers, McAfee presented Shubeck and Albert, a coin from the Military Assistance Command.

Shubeck replied "This is the least we can do for all of you. You and your families sacrifice so much for us here at home. We just wanted to show a little gesture of appreciation for all you do. Thank you so much for your service."

As evening fell and the races were all run, the Soldiers had to return to their hotel and await the long flight back to Kuwait City and to the war. But forever the memories of this gesture of gratitude by the volunteers of the USO, the Military Assistance officers and NCOs and people of Grand Prairie will remain with these Soldiers long after their return home.





*Sgt. Mark Engle, Command Sgt. Maj. Shaon Lee, Sgt. Mark West, Brig. Gen. Gordon Toney, Spec. Morena Charon and 1st Lt. Nathan Novak stand in front of one of Bravo Company 181<sup>st</sup> BSB's vehicles during Brig. Gen. Toney's visit to Joint Base Balad May 29, 2009.*

## Brig. Gen. Toney visits 81<sup>st</sup> BCT in Iraq

*By Sgt. Amanda Gauthier  
81<sup>st</sup> BCT Public Affairs*

Soldiers of the 81<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team, Washington Army National Guard deployed to Iraq were visited by Brig. General Gordon Toney the commander of the Washington Army National Guard during the last week in May.

This trip was a farewell tour for Toney. In a change of command ceremony held on Camp Murray, Wash. Brig. Gen. Toney handed command

over to Brig. Gen. Bret Daugherty June 7, 2009.


During his 3-day Iraq trip Toney visited as many units as he could. His first stop was Camp Ramadi to be briefed by Col. Ronald Kapral, the 81<sup>st</sup> BCT Commander. He was only there long enough to be briefed, eat lunch and visit with a few Soldiers before going to in Mosul to see 2-146<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery on Forward Operating Base Marez. His next stop was Qayyarah West Airfield, know as Q-West, to visit with the 81<sup>st</sup> Brigade Troops Battalion and Headquarters 181<sup>st</sup> Brigade Support Battalion. During each of his visits he spent time visiting with troops and telling them how proud he is of them. He also brought a message of gratitude from Christine Gregoire, the Washington State Governor, Maj. Gen. Timothy Lowenburg the Adjutant General for the Washington National Guard and their fellow Soldiers. He was often heard telling Soldiers to, "Stay focused on the mission and stay strong, finish strong."

Toney's final visit was to Joint Base Balad where he ate breakfast with Soldiers with members of 1-161<sup>st</sup> Inf. (Combined Arms Battalion), Alpha and Bravo companies of 181<sup>st</sup> BSB. After breakfast Soldiers from 1-161<sup>st</sup>



*Brig Gen. Gordon Toney Talks with 81<sup>st</sup> BCT Soldiers stationed on Joint Base Balad May 29, 2009.*

(CAB) B Co. 181<sup>st</sup> BSB gave Toney a ride in an Mine-resistant ambush protected vehicle and take a look at many of the vehicles his troops are using for convoy escort missions

During breakfast he said, "We've asked a lot of all of you and you've delivered, on every challenge. you know they say that challenges is what makes life interesting, and the challenges overcome is what makes life meaningful. You've met every challenge that we've presented you with the hard work and dedication it takes to train and get ready for this deployment. I just want to thank you so much. We knew we could rely upon you from the beginning and we knew we put together a great team." 



*Maj. Pete Hudspeth, the 81<sup>st</sup> BCT S-4 gives Brig Gen. Gordon Toney framed Raven during Toney's final trip to visit the 81<sup>st</sup> BCT in Iraq May 27, 2009.*





# Highlanders & Lions join for a common goal

**Task Force 1-161 Infantry medics and the 532<sup>nd</sup> Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron make life a little better for the Iraqi people.**

*By Capt. Mike Vincent,  
1-161<sup>st</sup> Inf. (CAB)*

The streets were bustling with families coming back from the date fields, piled into pickup trucks and sharing the roads with the neighborhood cows, both making their way through the village traffic. The sounds of children playing and vehicle horns sounding could be heard in all directions and the aroma of cooking lamb and car exhaust filled the early afternoon air. Suddenly, the village was overcome with a different sound. The sounds of Lion 1-3 gun trucks were fast approaching. The mood of the village changed. As quickly as the Americans came, so did the Iraqi children. The Iraqi children ran to the American gun trucks with the same fervor and anticipation as American children would greet the neighborhood ice cream man. The 532<sup>nd</sup> Expeditionary Security Squadron Lion patrol with their Highlander combat medics had arrived.

The war has changed. Army Staff Sgt. Gregg O. Hutchinson of Sunnyside, Wash., the 1-161 Highlander Medic dismounted his gun truck and took only a few steps into the village when the inevitable summons came, "Get Doc up here!" This time, the call was not for an American Soldier, but an injured Iraqi girl.

Hutchinson, AKA "Hutch," ran to the rear of the column and was met by a group of Iraqi children holding a young girl. Hutch reached into his medic bag which he had filled with every conceivable first aid item he could think of anticipating these events. Hutch applied an antibiotic cream to the affected area, wrapped it and gave over the tube. Through the Iraqi interpreter, Hutch gave the older brother instructions on the medicines

use. The siblings quickly ran off for fear of getting the valuable cream snatched away before they could get home. Hutch was approached again by another child and then another, and another. This drill was repeated throughout the afternoon, taking away the hurt and replacing them with smiles on the future of Iraq.

The 532<sup>nd</sup> Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron is responsible for the perimeter security in and around the villages and farms that surround Joint Base Balad. In addition to the daily security patrols, the 532<sup>nd</sup> ESFS gathers intelligence by contacting local citizens. In an effort to provide additional medical help to both the security patrols and the local Iraqi community; the 532<sup>nd</sup> ESFS chose to augment their patrols with experienced combat medics from Task Force 1-161 Infantry. The Task Force 1-161 Infantry "Highlanders" is one of the largest tenant units on JBB and has many veteran Soldiers, to include veteran medics from their last deployment in 2004.

"We did MEDCAP [Medical Civil Action Program] missions back in 2004," Hutchinson explained. "We set up in a school or vacant lot and did what we could with what we had. Today, we are supposed to step back and let the Iraqis take over. But, in many cases, they still don't have the resources available to take care of the people. So, we try to assist in any small way we are able to."

Hutchinson is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom II and is a certified paramedic with Sunnyside Fire Department and the Sunnyside Police Department in Washington state. "We see very small villages around JBB, as compared to Baghdad. It seems the people who live in these villages live hand to mouth on a daily basis. We may be the only medical provider they will ever see while we are on patrol," Hutchinson continued. "It's the greatest job I have ever had in the military. We treat medical conditions that we would never see back home or even when treating Soldiers here at JBB."

Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Chad B. Bennett of Rathdrum, Id., the chief medical NCO in 1-161<sup>st</sup> Inf. (CAB), explained how the program came about, "We went to a medical conference in December and got to know many of the key people in the OIF medical community. A doctor in Baghdad with the PRT [Provincial Reconstruction Team] we spoke with mentioned the Air Force mission around JBB and the need for medics. So, we contacted the 532<sup>nd</sup> ESFS and they said they would love to have us," Bennett continued. "We have executed over 150 missions since the beginning of April and our medics have treated over a hundred Iraqi patients."

This mission gives us the opportunity to reach out to the Iraqi community," said Sgt. Robert P. Mulrooney of Bellingham, Wash. "Often times, the villagers are turned away at the local hospital. So, we treat them on the scene. If it's more than we can provide we do our



*Spc. Bradley V. Peters of Sunnyside, Wash. and the airman of the 532<sup>nd</sup> Expeditionary Security Squadron conduct dismounted patrol operations south of Joint Base Balad. (Photo courtesy of 1-161<sup>st</sup> Inf. (CAB))*

*See HIGHLANDERS page 9*



Two Soldiers from the 1-185<sup>th</sup> Ar. (CAB) practice newly acquired combative skills during the Combatives Level 1 class. Soldier put their skills to use during the combatives tournament held the day after students completed the combatives course.

By Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Robert Tackett  
HHC 1-185<sup>th</sup> Ar. (CAB)

There is a new epidemic going around the 1-185<sup>th</sup> Ar. (Combined Arms Battalion). Be cautious and take care or you just may be affected. Some common symptoms are heart palpitations, sweaty skin and palms, muscle aches and pains and in severe cases, dizziness which may lead to unconscious-

## Modern Army Combatives Program


ness. It is patiently waiting to course through our veins. One Soldier has been affected by this condition when he playfully bumped into a Level two carrier. The level two carrier, quickly affected the Soldier, rendering him safely unconscious in a matter of seconds. Of course, I am talking about the now mandatory class of Army Combatives level one and the voluntary level two Combatives Instructor Course. The combative fever has been racing through the 1-185<sup>th</sup> Ar. (CAB) like a contagious disease.

The first Soldiers of the 1-185<sup>th</sup> to fall victim to this condition in 2009, were I, Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Robert Tackett, the battalion Medical Platoon sergeant in Headquarters and Headquarters Company 1-185<sup>th</sup> Ar. (CAB), Staff Sgt. Bachelor and Staff Sgt. Cota.

Now that we have recovered and are now certified instructors of Level one and Level two Combatives, the 1-185<sup>th</sup> Ar. (CAB) has pushed through and certified 39 brand new Level one Soldiers. That is about 9 percent of the battalion in ten days. Currently 52 Soldiers are certified. This ground fighting style, based on

Gracie Brazilian Ju-jitsu, is a solid foundation from which to train in further hand to hand combat tactics.

The class teaches the Warrior Spirit to never quit and to close the distance with your enemy, obtain a dominant position, then finish your enemy. This level one class teaches basic ground grappling positions like the Mount, Side Control, Guard and Rear Mount. It also demonstrates finishing moves such as straight arm bars, bent arm bars, and the famous rear naked choke.

Treating the Combatives condition is fast and furious. Many hours of studying and grappling on the mats is necessary to sweat it out. A Clinch drill to show your Warrior Spirit and willingness to close with the enemy is mandatory and always leaves the body sore. Choke out day always causes anxiety and nervousness. A practical demonstration of skills and finally a tournament to decide the overall class champion completes the treatment. Spc. Potter from the S-6 won six times in the single elimination tournament and was declared the champion. 




Proudly Presents  
2009 Deployment Excellence Award



Operational Deployment Small Unit - Winner  
Headquarters and Headquarters Battery  
2nd Battalion, 146th Field Artillery Regiment  
Olympia, Washington

By Maj. Pete Hudspeth  
81st BCT S-4

Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2-146<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery won the coveted Department of the Army Deployment Excellence Award for 2009 in the Operational Small Unit category.

It is a huge accomplishment, as it is the first time in the history of the 81<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team that any of our units have won a national level logistics award. They competed nationally, and were selected from a large number of candidates from the Active Army, National Guard and the Army Reserve. 





Staff Sgt. William B. Stanchfield of Tacoma, Wash listens while Staff Sgt. Ray E. Chumley of Bellingham, Wash gives the scheme of maneuver to the Charlie Company convoy during a convoy mission at Joint Base Balad. (Photo courtesy of 1-161 Inf. (CAB))

## A Soldiers Story – Then & Now

**A Task Force 1-161 Gulf War veteran Soldier gives his insight on the future of Iraq during his final days in a familiar land.**

By Capt. Mike Vincent,  
1-161<sup>st</sup> Inf. (CAB)

**G**o Long!" says one of the members of Charlie Company, 1-161<sup>st</sup> Inf. (CAB) as they break out a football for a five-hour layover at Camp Speicher. As the Soldiers of Charlie Company kill time, their newly appointed convoy commander, Staff Sgt. William Stanchfield of Tacoma, Wash. sits in his vehicle planning the return trip to Joint Base Balad. With the long line of trucks in sight, he further studies his map and verifies his radio frequencies as the staging line gets longer, waiting for the last truck to line up and the signal that they are ready to move.

Iraq is far from anything new to Stanchfield. He is one of only a handful of Soldiers in the Task Force 161 that saw combat during the first Gulf War. He first served in Iraq as an M1-A1 tank driver with 1-35<sup>th</sup> Armor assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division from 1990-1991.

"The first Gulf War was a war. It was what I envi-

sioned as what a war was going to be with the Iraqis," said Stanchfield "During that war, once we got over the berm, the Iraqis wanted nothing more than to get away from us."

"In '91, we were about 200 miles inside of Kuwait on the second day of the attack. We were waiting for something to happen when we noticed about six to eight prisoners waiving pieces of red clothing to signal their surrender. I thought it was peculiar, but I discovered that their officers didn't give them anything white so they could not surrender." Stanchfield continued. "So, I was put in charge of guarding these Iraqi prisoners, not with the .50 cal, but with the tank itself. The sound of the .50 firing didn't scare them, but the sound of the M1 terrified them. So, I sat there with my tank running, guarding the prisoners with the tank. I noticed than one of them had a gangrenous leg injury from the air bombing. So, our medic treated his leg. The look on this prisoner's face at the little aid we provided him, I think made a drastic change on the impression of what Americans were to this Iraqi Soldier."

Stanchfield is an avid student of history and holds an advanced degree. As a Soldier with first-hand experience from which to draw upon, he provides a unique perspective into the harsh reality that faces the Iraqi people and the new hope that rests in the Iraqi children.

"For thousands of years, the Iraqi government was the tribal hierarchy. They have always mistrusted government and have always had a difficult time embracing nationalism. This is what they have raised their people to believe. So, to think that the U.S. can just come in and change things in only a few years going against thousands of years of history is not realistic." Stanchfield continued. "The adults won't change. But the key to breaking the past is the future of Iraq, the children. The kids are the solution to the problems here in Iraq. When you treat the children well in any tribe, you treat the tribe well, and with the tribe comes the government and then the country."

Stanchfield recalls an experience in 2004 working outside of Victory Base in Baghdad. "We came across this Iraqi kid that had stepped on a nail and the injury had become infected and abscessed. But, this kid had no shoes. Being a registered nurse, I was able to drain the abscesses and treat the wound, but with no shoes, it would be a waste of time; it would just get infected more. So, I gave \$20 to my interpreter to buy shoes in town for this kid. After finally finding the right size, I treated this kid and saw him every so often and he got better. Now he and his family knows there is one American that cares for him. Now, that child, the future of Iraq, will carry that experience with him forever."

Stanchfield recalled a story he heard from his driver that illustrates his solution that the key to Iraq is the children. Spc. Chris B. Fisher of Vancouver, Wash. recalls an event that he feels did more to win the war than anything he has ever done since. "In 2006, I was deployed with the Strykers out of Fort Lewis and we were in charge of this village. There was this kid we called "Gizmo". Gizmo had Downs Syndrome and we

See *CHANGE* page 24



# In Focus: TRICARE Vision Care Benefits

By Kristen Ward  
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

Can you read this? How about now? **Better?**

If you have trouble reading any of the words above, you may want to have your eyes checked. Fortunately, vision care is a TRICARE-covered benefit. Here's how the benefit varies by your plan and age.

## Active Duty

Active duty service members and family members (ADFM) enrolled in TRICARE Prime are allowed a comprehensive eye exam every year with no co-pay. TRICARE Standard and Extra ADFM beneficiaries older than 6 years have coverage for one routine eye exam yearly. After the deductible is met, cost-shares will apply for those using TRICARE Standard and Extra plans.

## Retirees

TRICARE Prime retirees and family members are eligible for one comprehensive eye exam every two years with a network optometrist or ophthalmologist. They may have a \$12 co-pay if seen outside the base clinic. Retired beneficiaries with TRICARE Standard only have vision benefits when diagnosed with a medical condition such as glaucoma, cataracts or diabetes. Normal deductible and cost shares apply.

## Children

All TRICARE-eligible children, regardless of plan, are covered for eye and vision screenings at birth and for a routine exam at 6 months old by their primary or pediatric provider. All family members between the ages of 3 and 6 years are authorized to receive two comprehensive eye exams—including screening for developmental disorders—annually. After age 6, they can receive one exam per year by an ophthalmologist or optometrist depending on their TRICARE plan.

## Comprehensive Exams

Eye doctors use a wide variety of tests and procedures to examine your eyes during a comprehensive exam. These tests range from simple ones, like reading an eye chart, to more complex tests.

Beneficiaries should receive comprehensive exams through an optometrist or ophthalmologist and do not usually need a referral. TRICARE Prime beneficiaries will need a referral for routine eye exams received outside the provider network. Active duty service members must get a referral through their primary care manager (PCM).

In addition to preventive exams, TRICARE covers most medically necessary eye exams. Diabetic beneficiaries are covered for an eye exam each year with no co-payment,

regardless of their sponsor's military status, although they may pay cost shares. TRICARE Prime beneficiaries need referrals for medically necessary visits if they are outside of a military treatment facility (MTF).

Beneficiaries can find a list of TRICARE network vision care providers in TriWest's online Provider Directory at [www.triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com)>Beneficiary>Provider. Searches can be conducted by location and specialty (for eye care, choose ophthalmology or optometry).


Beneficiaries who receive care at an MTF should check to see if that clinic offers special programs for vision care.

## Glasses and Contacts

For active duty service members, eyeglasses are available at military treatment facilities for free. All other TRICARE beneficiaries have coverage for contact lens or eyeglasses only if they are diagnosed with:

- Infantile glaucoma
- Keratoconus
- Dry eyes
- Irregularities in the eye's shape
- Loss of human lens function from eye surgery or congenital absence.

Replacement lenses, or adjustments, cleaning and repairs of eyeglasses are not covered. Contact screenings and fittings are also not a TRICARE-covered benefit unless you have one of the medical conditions listed above.

For more information about your vision benefits, visit [www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil)>mybenefit>home>Vision. 







Spc. Adrian Fuentes and Spc. Stephen Ruth inspect a weapon in preparation for an impending convoy escort mission May 29, 2009. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)

### CONVOY Continued from page 8

thought it would be really fun because I wasn't going to be stuck in an office on a [forward operating base] the whole entire deployment I was actually going to be out here doing stuff and seeing the culture. I still like it. I have fun doing it and I am glad I am not stuck on a FOB. Even though it's hot and sweaty, I love doing this type of work."

According to Capt. Joshua Daily, the commander of B Co. 181<sup>st</sup> BSB, the men and women of B Co. 181<sup>st</sup> BSB have proven themselves particularly adaptable Soldiers. As a company made up of a conglomeration of various non-combat arms MOS they had very little experience in maneuver concepts beyond their basic training experience.

"Even though we first thought that this was a detriment, we quickly realized that we were starting with a blank canvas that would allow us to paint the correct picture from the start," said Daily.

The high number of mechanics in B Co. 181<sup>st</sup> gives the convoy security squads an advantage at times. They are often able to fix their own equipment when away from their motor pool.

"Having mechanics out there who knew how to do recovery and do maintenance really added to our success out on the road. They were able to troubleshoot stuff out there," said Cournier.

Many of the Soldiers had to adapt to a new duties in Iraq but they have gained a lot from their experiences and have proven themselves over and over again.

"The unit has grown at every level during this deployment," said Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Sweeney, the command sergeant major of the 81<sup>st</sup> BCT. "They now have gained confidence in their skills as Soldiers and leaders and are quite capable of taken on any mission thrown at them with a can-do attitude"

"We have been very successful in conducting convoy security missions in a safe and professional manner," said Daily. "I am incredibly proud of all the Soldiers that have made up Bravo Company during this deployment. This mission has been drastically different from anything most of them expected to experience while in the Guard in their current MOS. It truly shows how dynamic and capable a Washington Guard Soldier can be."

## HEALTH CORNER

By Lt. Col. Stephen Anderson  
81<sup>st</sup> BCT Brigade Surgeon

The sunrises and sunsets in Iraq can be beautiful. However, one of the things that make a striking sunset is the large amount of dirt and dust in the air. Many 81<sup>st</sup> Soldiers had been to Iraq before, so knew what to expect of air quality. There is no Environmental Protection Agency or Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Iraq. The Iraqis seem to burn everything. So do we at many of our bases. The U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine has done many air quality studies. One recent study followed the air quality at Joint Base Balad for one year. The study also looked at Soldiers who were stationed there, and lived close to the burn pit, for the year. The conclusions indicated that although the particulate matter count was higher than recommended values, there was probably no long term health damage. In addition, they measured Dioxin, a known cancer causing agent, in Soldier's stationed in JBB. Their studies indicated no build up of Dioxin after a year's exposure.

However, the common sense interpretation of this data is: When the air quality is especially bad, with high particulate matter or smoke, stay indoors. Do not do strenuous physical training when the air is unusually heavy. Scarves or particle masks can help filter out the larger particles such as dust, but don't do much for smoke and fine particles.

If you currently have or have had any breathing problems, chronic cough, or exercise intolerance, please see your medical provider. If there is any question about the air here causing chronic problems, talk to your provider about an LOD for possible future care. Enjoy the last month or two of sunsets in Iraq, and look forward to the best sunsets at home!

### CHANGE Continued from page 6

would see him all of the time standing out in front of his house waving at us. We would always wave back." Fisher continued, "One day, we tossed him a soccer ball as we were patrolling the town. The other kids quickly took it from him. So, the next day we made a plan to get him another soccer ball. We cordoned his house, got a squad together and gave the soccer ball to Gizmo and escorted him back to his house so he could secure the ball. His family seemed to be really touched by this."

"Its stories like this and other little acts of kindness that are going to make us successful here in Iraq," said Stanchfield. "The Iraqi people are survivors and they will survive this too. I wish them all the best."

This will be the last tour for Sergeant Stanchfield and plans on retiring after the end of his final enlistment. After deployment he plans on going to Europe with his wife Sharri and visiting their grandchildren. He will continue his service to his country as a Registered Nurse working at the Veterans Hospital in Seattle.



Spc. Bradley V. Peters of Sunnyside, Wash. stops to hands out toothpaste and toothbrushes to an Iraqi children who live near Joint Base Balad. (Photo by Capt. Mike Vincent)

### HIGHLANDERS Continued from page 6

best to coordinate with 532<sup>nd</sup> Physicians Assistant, CPT Dart to recommend a higher level to the nearest civilian hospital."

"Our primary mission is security. The outside patrols conduct missions for terrain denial, making our presence known to insurgents and others who mean us harm," said Air Force Capt. Laura J. Dart of Offutt, Neb. the chief medical officer with the 532<sup>nd</sup> ESFS. "The patrol members visit with local residents and find out how their community is functioning. Along the way, we are able to render care to the people we encounter." Dart continued, "Our Army combat medics have seen countless numbers of injuries. The medic's high level of medical knowledge combined with their vast experience with patrols and convoys outside the wire make them an immeasurable asset."

"Many times, we see the same people and treat them with an ongoing injury," said Spc. Bradley V. Peters of Sunnyside, Wash. "This allows us as Soldiers to build relationships and it makes the people feel we are not here to harass them, but to help them and let them know we actually care." Peters continued, "With the work that we do, the insurgents may think twice about attacking us if we can provide medical care for their children. It may make that decision that much harder."

Over the past three months, Peters and the airmen of the 532<sup>nd</sup> have adopted an Iraqi family and their four-year-old daughter who was a victim of severe oil burns as a result of a kitchen fire. The Highlander medics and the patrols of the 532<sup>nd</sup> have made frequent visits to the home with supplies, clothes and medicines to nurse the girl back to health.


"The burn is almost completely healed and looks a thousand times better than it did when we first saw it," said Spc. Ryan C. Smith of Richland, Wash. "We try to see her as often as we can."

"It's more fulfilling to be out with the Iraqi people," said Mulrooney. "We have a great impact on the Iraqi

people with this mission and I think we have opened their minds on who we are as American Soldiers."


Peters said, "I couldn't think of any thing better I could be doing with my life right now. It truly feels like we have made a difference here."

The teamwork and cooperation between the 532<sup>nd</sup> Lions and the TF 1-161 is extraordinary. The daily eight to ten hour missions in temperatures in excess of a hundred degrees covering vast square miles of farmlands and villages exhibit true dedication to the mission and to the safety and security of Joint Base Balad and the Iraqi people that live in its shadow.



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





NUMBER OF TICKETS: \_\_\_\_\_ X \$10 (reg. \$34) = \_\_\_\_\_

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**The Seattle Storm are offering discounted tickets to the military community for their July 19th military appreciation game. See attached for more details. Click on the link below for tickets on-line.**

[http://oss.ticketmaster.com/html/group\\_corp\\_start.html?l=EN&team=storm&owner=4427245&group=217&err=&event=&customerID](http://oss.ticketmaster.com/html/group_corp_start.html?l=EN&team=storm&owner=4427245&group=217&err=&event=&customerID)

**Password: military**





## OFFICERS Continued from page 22

signment, and looks forward to the challenge that leadership provides. From his experiences in OCS, he says "OCS has taught me to look at a bigger picture in my military career and to think about how what I am doing impacts the Army as a whole and the efforts of people many levels above and below me."

### Earning a Degree

2nd Lt. Zack Brown graduated from Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA. Brown was able to achieve civilian education goals while simultaneously commissioning as an Officer. He chose ROTC because "I was interested in getting a Master's degree and ROTC paid for it."

Through his involvement with ROTC, the Army National Guard awarded Brown a scholarship that not only covered the \$33,000 annual graduate tuition at Gonzaga but also gave him over \$1,500 per month to cover his living expenses. Brown commissioned as an Armor officer with a master's in leadership studies. Having recently completed his Basic Officer Leadership Courses, he is currently assigned to the 1-303<sup>rd</sup> Cav. Rear Detachment.

Brown's advice for Soldiers interested in commissioning is to, "take advantage of whatever opportunities



you may have now for leadership positions... [and] understand that becoming an officer is a commitment to those Soldiers who serve under you."

For Soldiers currently in school or looking to get started, the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) provides a path towards a commission while giving you the financial assistance needed to complete college. ROTC is a series of college courses taken in addition to the Soldier's standard academic load. Most Guard Soldiers who enroll in ROTC under the Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) take home over \$1,400 per month plus tuition while in college full-time. Those who are awarded a Guaranteed Forces Duty Scholarship make upwards of \$2,100 per month in addition to tuition, even


at costly private universities.

Lt. Col. Craig Whiteside, Commander and Professor of Military Science at Washington State University feels ROTC is the best option for future leaders.

He states, "ROTC is a long term approach to producing quality officers, who have the academic background and comprehensive interaction with the veteran cadre that fill all ROTC units, who make tremendously successful Army officers."

Whiteside also enjoys filling his program with Guard Soldiers adding, "The best cadets in our ROTC program are former Soldiers because they have the maturity to realize the opportunity in front of them and the discipline to succeed in their academic studies." ROTC Departments can be found at eight major Washington universities as well as several satellite campuses and community colleges.

### Choosing a Path

Over the next year, the Washington Army National Guard will commission over 60 new second Lieutenants into its ranks. Like McCarthy, many of these new officers were enlisted Soldiers a few short years ago who made a decision work towards their degree and earn a commission. Others, like Brown are able to use the benefits of ROTC to fund their education and gain their commission. Despite the efforts of motivated Soldiers like McCarthy, Brown and Ramey, the Washington Army National Guard still has officer shortages. An Officer Recruiting Team has been established by the State of Washington to help motivated Soldiers choose the path that is appropriate for them and guide them through the commissioning process. The Officer Recruiting Team works closely with ROTC Departments and the 205<sup>th</sup> RTI's OCS program to assist Soldiers with enrollment. If you have what it takes to serve as an Officer in the Army National Guard, email [NGWAosm@ng.army.mil](mailto:NGWAosm@ng.army.mil) and visit <http://officer.washingtonarmyguard.org/> 



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# THE RAVEN GALLERY



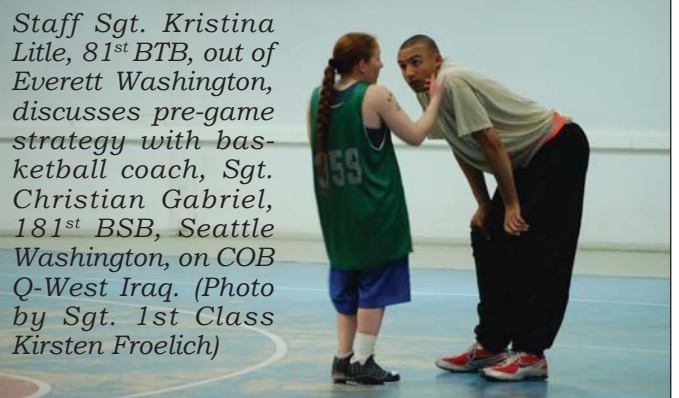
Maj. Kevin Harmon, Capt. David Raines and Lt. Col. Ken Garrison of Headquarters 81<sup>st</sup> BTB, Everett, Wash., head out on the bicycle portion of the COB Q-West Biathlon. They biked 11 kilometers and ran 5 kilometers. Maj. Harmon finished fourth overall. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kirsten Froelich)



Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and civilians enjoyed a cultural luncheon on Camp Ramadi May 13, 2009. The feast was provided by the Sheik Shalan and the Shalan Company to celebrate the completion of the building reparation contract by the Shalan Company. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr)



During a 5K run to celebrate the Army's 234<sup>th</sup> birthday and Flag Day held on Camp Ramadi June 14, 2009, Sgt. Tobias Suhr leads the pack carrying the Headquarters 81<sup>st</sup> BCT guidon with Maj. Kurt Rorvik right on his heels and Staff Sgt. Francisco Velez and not far behind are Staff Sgt. Jared Stewart wearing a T-shirt that says "Happy 234th Birthday, Camp Ramadi, Iraq, June 14, 2009." (Photo by Sgt. Amand Gauthier)



Staff Sgt. Kristina Little, 81<sup>st</sup> BTB, out of Everett Washington, discusses pre-game strategy with basketball coach, Sgt. Christian Gabriel, 181<sup>st</sup> BSB, Seattle Washington, on COB Q-West Iraq. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kirsten Froelich)



Brig. Gen. Gordon Toney, displays the 1-161st Inf. (CAB) Highlanders T-shirt given to him by Maj. David Hamilton during Toney's visit to Joint Base Balad May 29, 2009. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)



Command Sgt. Maj. David Nunn, the command sergeant major for the 81st Brigade Troops Battalion, Brig. Gen. Gordon Toney the former Assistant Adjutant General for the Washington Army National Guard, Maj. Stanley Seo from the 81st BTB and Command Sgt. Maj. Shawn Lee, the command sergeant major of the 420<sup>th</sup> Chem. Stand in front of a Seattle skyline painted on barriers in Cob Q-West Iraq. (Photo by Lt. Col. James North)





# Important notice for Wash. Guard Soldiers

## WAARNG members personal information may have been compromised, find out how to protect yourself

By Lt. Col. Perry C. Chappell  
WAARNG G-1

Recently, the Washington Army National Guard discovered that some documents routinely sent to another installation for shredding were actually being recycled rather than shredded. Therefore, there is some possibility that old records and files that may have contained personal identifiable information such as name, social security number, home address, date of birth, and/or home telephone number may have been recycled rather than shredded.

We have conducted a preliminary investigation and have found no evidence that any documents or personal information has been compromised. Moreover, we believe the probability is low that

this information could be acquired and used for an unlawful purpose. An official investigation is ongoing and any relevant information discovered through that investigation will be provided to you.

Nevertheless, please consider taking steps to protect yourself against the prospect of identity theft. The Federal Trade Commission recommends you contact one of the three credit agencies to place a fraud alert on your credit file. This free fraud alert is for a period of 90 days and can be renewed every 90 days at no charge. A fraud alert requires creditors to contact you before a new credit card is issued or an existing card is changed. Learn how to do this by following the guide on the FTC web site at: <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/alerts/>

alt150.shtm. You can start your fraud alert and monitor your credit report by contacting one of the three credit agencies: Transunion <http://www.transunion.com/index.jsp>; Equifax <http://www.equifax.com/>; or Experian <http://www.experian.com/>.

The Social Security Administration allows you to monitor use of your social security number. Their toll-free number is 1-800-772-1213. Additional contact information is found on their web site <http://www.ssa.gov>.

Please consider taking the precautionary measures listed above. We deeply regret any inconvenience this may cause you, and assure you that we are taking steps to ensure this does not happen again.

If you have further questions or concerns, please contact us by phone or e-mail at 1-800-306-1947 or [Ngwapii@ng.army.mil](mailto:Ngwapii@ng.army.mil).

## 81<sup>ST</sup> BCT PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



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IDENTIFY WHO IS IN THE PHOTO, WHO TOOK THE  
PHOTO, WHEN AND WHERE.

(IDENTIFICATION = FULL NAME, RANK, UNIT, DUTY  
POSITION AND HOMETOWN).



## The Family Assistance Network

The California National Guard established a Family Assistance Network as a resource to Guard and other military families - especially those involved in current deployments. They have developed rosters of civilian, government, and military agencies that can help families dealing with issues that have surfaced because of active duty.

To find someone who can help near you visit:  
<http://www.calguard.ca.gov/readyfamilies>