

Lightning Weekly

Service Beyond Self

Willingness to sacrifice personal comfort for a greater peace remains an integral part of the personal and professional successes of each U.S. servicemember



U.S. Army photo provided by Task Force Lightning Public Affairs



FROM THE DESK OF 'LIGHTNING 6'



Maj. Gen. Robert L. Caslen Jr.

Battlefield Ethics

We operate in a tremendously complex environment, where junior leaders are constantly making strategic decisions.

We represent our Nation and our Nation's Values. Our ACTIONS are on display at all times, Live Our Army Values.

They define the parameters of acceptable behavior in this complex operating environment.

The Army standard is based on Ethical, Moral, and Legal Guidelines: The Army Values (Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage); UCMJ; and Army Regulations.

This standard is upheld and enforced by the Chain of Command. Battlefield ethics need to be taught and refresher training offered.. Constant deployments and the continual stress of operations during deployment tend to desensitize Soldiers. The Battlefield Training Package was developed to create a dialogue amongst all Task Force Lightning members in this important aspect of the Profession of Arms.

All TFL members are required to complete this training.

Off-the-FOB Ethics - Moral Courage and Self Discipline are the hallmarks of a professional warrior.

We represent America and the US Army. The fact that we have a strong Battlefield Ethic and live by high standards gets noticed.

The US Military has become a ray of hope to those who are in need. Ethical guidelines give us framework within which to function on the Battlefield. Our treatment of others is one of our greatest statements about what we believe. Soldiers must be trained in and apply the Soldier's Rules. These rules represent our bedrock values and will not lead you astray.

On-the-FOB Ethics - The Army Values do not apply only during missions, they guide our behavior every day, both on and off post.

The Army Values guide the thinking, behavior, and professional ethos of every warrior.

The American people hold the entire Army to a higher standard, not just the front-line Warriors. The priorities we set, the efficiencies we gain, the continuous improvements we achieve, will be attained in keeping with our Army Values.

I expect every Soldier to be truly concerned about every TFL member. We are most productive in an environment where all Soldiers are valued and treated with respect and dignity.

We must continually measure ourselves, and our success by our adherence to the Army Values. High ethical standards in the military is neither a luxury nor an abstract ideal. Living by the Army Values is a vital aspect of mission accomplishment.

I expect all TFL members to protect and enhance the image of Task Force Lightning, the US Army, and our Nation.



TROPIC LIGHTNING!

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

New roads help Iraqi village connect



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

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq – In the small but growing Iraqi village of Kardaara in Kirkuk province, Iraq, residents have to move along dusty trails by foot to get around town.

Thanks to the Iraqi Roads and Bridges Directorate, with help from the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, residents will soon be able to travel much easier due to an ongoing project aimed at building a network of roads within Kardaara.

Abbas Ali, from Vancouver, Canada and a civil engineer with the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kirkuk, traveled to Kardaara, June 11, to check on the progress of the project.

“I’m here to check on the progress on the roads and also to verify the quality of the compaction which determines the suitability for soil to be constructed upon,” Ali said.

Sgt. Carlos Martinez, a Ventura, Calif. native with the 490th Civil

Affairs Battalion, who also works with the Kirkuk PRT, said the project, which began in May, was funded through the use of the Iraqi Commander’s Emergency Response Program funds.

In total, four different roads will be built in the town connecting residents to the Mosque, primary school, cemetery, and to outlying areas for farming.

“Farmers will be able to grow their crops and use the road to transport their crops to the markets,” Martinez said.

Ali said the project was coming along well.

“The sub-base, which is a mixture of sand and gravel that serves as the main load-bearing layer of a road, is the best I’ve seen,” Ali said.

There was even discussion with residents about a possible future project.

“The town is growing in size and the residents would like to see some additional classrooms added to the school,” Ali said.

Construction could be completed by the end of August.



Abbas Ali, from Vancouver, Canada and a civil engineer with the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kirkuk, Iraq, checks the construction status on a network of roads to connect facilities in the Iraqi village of Kardaara in Kirkuk province, June 11. In total, four different roads will be built in the town connecting residents to the Mosque, primary school, cemetery, and to outlying areas for farming. Construction should be completed by the end of August. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Douglas, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs)



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

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq – The Iraqi city of Riyadh in Hawijah district, Kirkuk province, celebrated the opening of a new courthouse for the sub-district of Riyadh June 14. “This is an important symbol for justice, equality and peace,” said Muhammad Hassan, mayor of Ridyah, following the cutting of a ceremonial ribbon marking the completion of the project.

The new courthouse, more than a year in the making and part of a larger project coordinated by the Kirkuk Provincial Reconstruction Team, was paid for with Commanders Emergency Response Program funds to renovate or rebuild courthouses throughout the province.

“The completion of this building is a significant milestone and is important to the judicial process,” said Steve Overman, the senior governance advisor for the U.S. State Department in Hawijah. “It’s a visible symbol of the rule of law that people can respect.”

According to Overman, the previous courthouse was converted from an old Iraqi Police station. The new facility is a two-story building with more than a dozen offices for judges, judicial investigators and security personnel.

“The building, whose completion we celebrate today, will serve two crucial functions,” Creamer said. “First, it will shelter and protect the people and procedures that ensure all citizens are consistently and fairly served by the law and second, it will stand as a powerful concrete symbol, enshrining and protecting the spirit of the law.”



Base Transfer Ceremony honors fallen warrior, recognizes bright future



BY Spc. Jazz Burney
3rd IBCT, 25th ID Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING

BASE SPEICHER, TIKRIT, Iraq – Soldiers lowered the American Flag and Iraqi soldiers raised the Iraqi Flag to signify the change of Forward Operating Base Paliwoda into the Iraqi-led Balad Joint Coordination Center, during a ceremony near Balad, Iraq June 15.

The Balad JCC combines Iraqi Army and Police coordination elements, along with civilian emergency response functions, together in one location.

“This ceremony represents the formal transition for the role of our partnered security forces,” said Lt. Col. David Hodne, the commander of 3rd Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

“The new role of U.S. forces in Balad will be one of reconstruction,” Hodne said, describing the role of his Soldiers under the Security Agreement as one of enabling, advising, assisting and building, while the Iraqi Security Forces protect the population.

Personnel working with the JCC will allow the ISF to take advantage of U.S. technology, including intelligence and aviation support.

“We will continue to partner with the Iraqi security forces to remove the catalyst of hate that serves as the only true obstacle to a prosperous Iraq. Even in the initial week of operations from this JCC, we’ve enjoyed success previously not achieved while we occupied separate facilities,” he said.



(From left to right) Lt. Col. David Hodne, Squadron Commander, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division; Balad Mayor Amar Abd Al-Hudi; and Staff Brig. Gen. Eissa, the Salah ad Din Provincial Joint Coordination Center director, signed a memorandum signifying the transition of Forward Operating Base Paliwoda into the Balad Joint Coordination Center, June 15. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jazz Burney, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs)



An Iraqi Soldier hoists the Iraqi flag during a transfer of authority ceremony to signify the opening of the Balad Joint Coordination Center, which previously was 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division's Forward Operating Base Paliwoda, June 15. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jazz Burney, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs, 25th Infantry Division)

U.S. Forces had used the base, initially known as FOB Eagle, since 2003. FOB Eagle was renamed FOB Paliwoda in 2004, in memory of Capt. Eric Paliwoda who was killed there during a mortar attack in January, 2004.

The American Flag last flown over the base and a letter from the Balad JCC director was sent to the Paliwoda family in recognition of Eric Paliwoda's sacrifice and service to his nation.

In the Army NOW!

Episode 02: The 1000 Yard Shot !

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



Join us next week for Episode 03: A Means to an End!

Blacksmiths train Iraqi mechanics for repairs



By Pfc. Jared Sollars and
Capt. Harley Jennings
3rd HBCT, 1st Cavalry Division

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, MOSUL, Iraq—Soldiers from the Bravo Field Maintenance Company, 215th Brigade Support Battalion traveled to Combat Outpost Al Kindi to conduct the first 215th BSB Iraqi Maintenance Academy, May 7.

Nine Iraqi maintenance soldiers, lead by Iraqi Army Maj. Oscar, came in to a classroom and were seated, ready to learn.

The training would cover preventative maintenance checks and services for the High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicle, often referred to as HMMWVs.

The hands-on portion of the training began with a PMCS on a HMMWV.

“Here the Iraqi soldiers learned that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of care,” said Capt. Harley Jennings, commander of Bravo Field Maintenance Company, 215th BSB.

On day two of the three day training, the team started early, conducting classroom instruction in the morning, reviewing PMCS procedures and moving on to

transmission trouble shooting techniques.

One vehicle in particular seemed to have significantly more issues than the others. After the PMCS lesson, the Iraqi mechanics attempted to start the vehicle. The vehicle had no power, but after the training team advised them to bring another vehicle over to jump start it, it came to life.

But from the odd sounds coming from the vehicle, it did not sound like a good life. The sounds were coming from the bell housing area of the transmission.

After closer examination the sound was determined to be caused by loose and stripped out torque converter bolts. It was also determined that there was something wrong with the flywheel bolts.

The trainers and students pulled the transmission back far enough to remove the flywheel, but instead of being able to remove the flywheel they discovered the bolts had been welded to the crankshaft and the flywheel.

“This was clear evidence that the Iraqi mechanics knew something needed to be fixed, but they didn’t know exactly how,” said Jennings.

The third day began with the maintenance team helping the Iraqi mechanics move the deadlined vehicle into the maintenance area where it was safer to work. The Iraqi and Coalition forces brainstormed on how to remove the flywheel without damaging the crankshaft.

Lovins came to the conclusion that the best way to do it would be to grind off the bolts. This course of action would keep the Iraqis from having to buy a new crankshaft.

Due to work/rest cycle of the Iraqi mechanics and time constraints on the training team, they would not be able to stay to help install the new parts when they came in. Lovins left very detailed instructions on how to install the parts.

“The high level of dedication and technical knowledge of the instructors at the maintenance academy helped to not only reinforce the partnership between the Greywolf Brigade and their Iraqi Army counterparts, but also helped train the next generation of Iraqi mechanics,” said Jennings.



'Arctic Wolves' work with fellow Fort Wainwright Soldiers



BY Spc. Anthony Jones
1st SBCT, 25th ID Public Affairs

DIYALA, Iraq - Soldiers with the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division are getting a little help from above, Cavalry style.

The brigade is receiving support from the 6th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, also from Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

The 6-17 cavalry unit flies OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopters. The Kiowa Warrior is a dual purpose surveillance and attack aircraft. The aircraft is able to mount several different weapons systems onboard, including .50 caliber machine guns and unguided rockets.

"Our mission here is to provide aerial recon and surveillance capabilities for U.S. and Coalition forces throughout the area of operations," said Capt. Robert Crouse, commander, Troop A, 6-17 Cav. Regt.

Crouse's troop is tasked with supporting two of Multi-National Division - North's brigades, the 1-25 and the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat

Team, 25th Infantry Division, based at Contingency Operating Base Spiecher.

"When we first got to Iraq the 1-25 wasn't here yet. When 1-25 did get here it was a good change of pace," said 1st Lt. Justin Kelly, a platoon leader and pilot with Troop A, 6-17 Cav. Regt. "It's really nice to work with these guys, it seems they are on top of their game. It's also nice to know when you're flying around supporting the ground guys they're your neighbors and friends from back home."

Working together isn't anything new for the two units. In 2006 the 6-17 Cav. Regt. was moved from Hawaii to Alaska in order to prepare the 1st and 4th Brigades, 25th Infantry Division for Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, said Maj. Beau Tibbets, 1-25 SBCT Brigade Aviation Officer and former troop commander in the 6-17.

"To my understanding the move was made because we had 1-25 and 4-25 in Alaska but no attack or recon assets for them to train with. So the 6-17 moved up there and started training," said Tibbets. "It worked out

great, now we are both deployed at approximately the same time and mutually supporting each other."

In order to better support ground units in Diyala and Multi-National Division - North the 6-17 is also operating in hunter killer teams or "pink teams" with units of the 1st Battalion 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, said Chief Warrant Officer Two Gunter Lugg. A "pink team" is a Kiowa Warrior working in tandem with an AH-64 Apache, providing the surveillance capabilities of the Kiowa Warrior with the firepower of the larger Apache.

"The command has found that for operations in Diyala, pink teams have provided a greater advantage. Providing longer station times and optimum capability to take out targets," said Lugg.

The 1-25 and 6-17, are taking the Army's battle buddy program and using it on a large scale. They are building relations not just between the Soldiers themselves but between units; building esprit de corps and brotherhood.



Arctic Wolves 'Northern Spotlight' : Co. A, 2/28 Inf.



Welcome to Combat Out Post Diamond, located south of Balad Ruz, Iraq, in the southern Diyala province. A contingency force on the land, members of Alpha Co., 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment under Task Force 3-66, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, along with other "enabler" personnel, call this area their home. Their mission is to not only help to improve the security of the area, but also improve the region's stability so that many of the displaced people, who once lived in the area, will return one day. (Profile and U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Jeremy Pitcher, 1st SBCT, 25 ID PAO)

10K RUN



FALCONS

4TH IRAQI ARMY MITT: HELPING IRAQIS IMPROVE TIKRIT



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
Pfc. Jesus J. Aranda
Task Force Lightning Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE

DAGGER, TIKRIT, Iraq – Casual conversation and a palpable camaraderie are evident in the office of one high-ranking Iraqi Army officer. This officer smiles and inquires about how his close friend's family is faring at home.

The relationship between these two men is one commonly shared between friends of a personal level, but these two men also share a significant professional relationship.

Col. Nassir Naji, the personnel executive officer for the 4th Iraqi Army Division, sits at his desk and listens intently as Capt. Alan Cheung, a San Francisco native and the G1 advisor for the 4th Iraqi Army Military Transition Team (MiTT), "Sakers", 25th Infantry Division, and San Francisco, Calif. native, discusses topics ranging from family, recreation, sports, and the benefits of freshly-laid chicken eggs.

Their informal visits offer the two brothers-in-arms the chance to relax and develop a lasting relationship outside of their professional duties. However, creating and sustaining a relationship of cooperation and trust is only one of the duties performed on a daily basis by the 4IA MiTT.

The 4th IA MiTT works alongside the 4th IA Div. at Forward Operating Base Dagger, just outside of Tikrit, in an advisory role. Their primary function is to assist their IA partners in improving their operations and supporting the Iraqi people within their area of operations.

"Our job is to make sure they are prepared to stand up by themselves," said Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Conway, a Superior, Wis. native and non-commissioned.



Col. Nassir Naji, the personnel executive officer for the 4th Iraqi Army Division, enjoys a friendly social chat with Capt. Alan Cheung, a San Francisco native and the G1 advisor for the 4th Iraqi Army Military Transition Team, 25th Infantry Division, at Forward Operating Base Dagger. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jesus J. Aranda, Task Force Lightning Public Affairs)

officer-in-charge of the 4th IA MiTT. "We do that by asking, 'Hey, have you thought about doing this?' or 'Maybe if we did this....'. We interact with our partners every day."

On a small corner of the Iraqi-operated FOB Dagger, "Saker" Soldiers work in an environment far removed from standard Army-led bases in Iraq or their home station at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. Several members of the 4th IA MiTT feel fortunate to be able to be a part of a unique team.

"One of the beauties of a MiTT team is that you have an opportunity to do something that you wouldn't really get an opportunity to do," said 1st Lt. David Belyn, 4th IA MiTT division personnel executive officer, and McVeyton, Pa. native. "All of us get to do things that directly impact the IA leaders and Iraqi people on a very high level."

For Conway, the only Soldier on

the team with previous MiTT experience, the team was presented with the potential challenge of a steep learning curve. The majority of his team entered the deployment with little to no experience working closely with IA soldiers.

Attributing their success to the team's willingness to fill in any gaps or absences in staffing, Belyn noted how well the team has performed, especially during situations where Soldiers were required to perform at a higher or lower level.

"Most of the Soldiers here are doing a job that may not necessarily fit their rank," said Belyn. "That's kind of the nature of a MiTT team. You can have a captain driving, a major as gunner and a sergeant as convoy commander. We all do what we need to do to accomplish the mission."

The guys have done great," Conway

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 8

said. "The team is made up of Soldiers who always think of new ways to improve things and ways to help each other or their Iraqi partners that I never could have thought of. It's all about what we can do better."

The "Saker" Soldiers have also made their living conditions better, taking initiative to improve their personal environment immediately upon arrival to FOB Dagger.

"When we got here, we had a bunch of large HESCO barriers out back," said Pfc. Ross Hart, a signal systems support specialist and a Washington, Ind. native with the 4th IA MiTT. "We all worked together to move them away for more room."

The space was filled with recreational and leisure equipment, including a home-made ping pong table and a vegetable garden.

"We don't have all of the luxuries of some of the bigger FOBs, but we make the best of what we do have," said Conway.

In addition, the team worked steadily to clean up their working environment.

"We typically perform beautification of the FOB on a weekly basis," said Belyn.

The team is rallied under the supervision and guidance of Col. Gary David, the 4th IA MiTT commander, who, according to Belyn, takes an extremely proactive role in further improving the team's results, no matter what the project may be.

For Conway, however, the importance of the pursuit of improvement lies primarily in continuous collaboration with their Iraqi partners. When working so closely, everybody develops a natural camaraderie, Conway noted.

"Working on a small FOB, everybody knows each other and can interact easier, like a small town," Conway said.

Like Cheung, some believe the interaction between the "Saker"

Soldiers and the 4th IA soldiers is paramount and encourages the team to develop friendships with their partners.

"Every Friday we do group physical training, sometimes competitively with the IA guys," Belyn said. "We play basketball, and volleyball and soccer. The IA guys are very good at soccer and always give us a challenge."

Iraqi soldiers are also proving themselves capable of taking on the challenges of security in the region.

"In the past, while we were in the lead, we may have limited what the Iraqis were able to do at times," Conway continued. "Now that they're in the front I see them doing more and functioning well independently."

Leading the effort around the region, many members of the 4th IA credit the MiTT for their assistance in their daily operations.

"The MiTT has been very helpful to us," said Nassir. "I've worked with five different MiTTs and this team is very, very helpful in our operations."

Conway, however, believes the 4th IA is primarily responsible for the escalating peace and lower levels of violence in the area.

"Last deployment, the FOB would get hit with mortars and small arms fire all the time, but this deployment is much quieter. The 4th IA has done its job well here," Conway said.

The healthy mix of personal and professional interaction between these two military teams, both dedicated to improving the surrounding area, can be seen as a primary ingredient to the recipe for success outside of Tikrit.

Whether or not the recipe requires a few freshly-laid chicken eggs remains to be seen, but the recipe certainly requires commitment to success and dedication to improvement. These two essential elements may very well begin with personal relationships between comrades and the continuing friendship between Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers.



Members of the 4th Iraqi Army Division and the 4th Iraqi Army Military Transition Team, 25th Infantry Division, work together to place a concrete shelter near a construction site outside of Tikrit, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jesus J. Aranda, Task Force Lightning Public Affairs)

LIGHTNING HERO OF THE WEEK

SPC JERRY GAYTON
UNIT: E Co 1-67 AR
HOMETOWN: GEORGIA

Spc. Gayton has been an instrumental part of the combined operations within the 1-67 AR Battalion.

Spc. Gayton was called upon on two different occasions to assist HHC and the Scouts on cache search missions.

Spc. Gayton has exceptional training on the AN/PSS-14 Mine Detectors and was able to provide effective means in locating these munitions, weapons and caches.

His technical abilities with the equipment enabled HHC to find over 600 pounds of military grade munitions.

This is a great win for coalition and Iraqi security forces, and denies the enemy their ability to use the munitions for future attacks. Additionally, Spc. Gayton has provided training for A/3-82 on the operation and use of the AN/PSS-14 where they successfully integrated the mine detector in their cache search missions.

Spc. Gayton's technical knowledge and professionalism is a force multiplier in the Combined Arms Battalion.



IRAQ FACTS

The Iraqi Dinar was first adopted in 1923, replacing the Indian Rupee following the British Occupation of Iraq.

Though the value of the Iraqi Dinar has fluctuated greatly since the mid-1900s, it had maintained it's basic form and image until 2004. Modern era anti-forgery printing technology was implemented into the Iraqi Dinar's design and quickly circulated.

Iraqi currency also include coins at one time in the denominations of 1, 5, 10, 25, 50, and 100 fils. Iraqi coins were no longer produced after 1990.

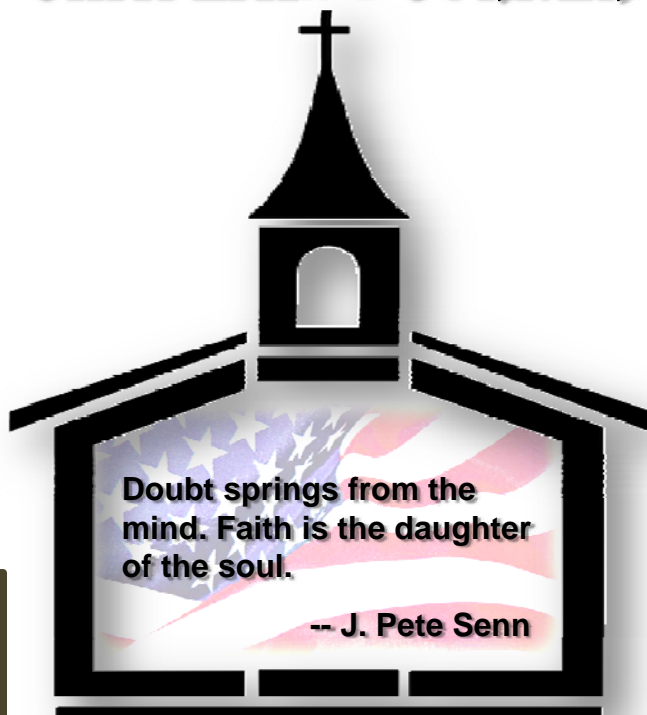
New coins were circulated in 2004, but these coins failed to earn public acceptance.

During Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, some currency displayed his appearance. These notes were poorly crafted, and often counterfeit versions of the notes appeared to be of higher quality than the originals.

The Saddam currency was phased out around 2002 in favor of a more diverse array of notes displaying more of the country's rich culture.

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CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



Microgrants are Successful with businesses



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
Staff Sgt. Melanie Trollinger
 2nd HBCT, 1st Cavalry Division



1st Lt. Daniel Braud, Kingwood, Texas native and a platoon leader with 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, inspects a clothing store, owned by Morad Ayad, in Kirkuk province, Iraq, June 16. Braud spent the day inspecting six businesses, all recipients of U.S. microgrants to ensure the funds were spent according to microgrant guidelines. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Melanie Trollinger)

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq – Iraqi residents in Kirkuk province use microgrants issued by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, to jumpstart businesses or renovate old ones.

With those microgrants comes oversight to ensure the funds are properly used. 1st Lt. Daniel Braud, Kingwood, Texas native and platoon leader in 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd BCT, paid a visit June 16 to inspect six Iraqi businesses who received the grant money.

Braud, whose unit is partnered with provincial leaders in southeastern Kirkuk province, met with several businessmen to inspect their businesses and see what improvements were made with the money they received.

"We pay up to \$5,000 per microgrant, and each recipient must own a business or be in the process of starting a business,

" Braud said. "We have strict rules on how the money can be spent."

Braud said most businesses use the funds to make improvements to the quality of the business by painting walls, installing air conditioners to make it more comfortable for patrons or buying generators for electricity.

Braud, accompanied by Iraqi Police from Daquq, travelled through a busy Kirkuk marketplace and stopped at a small tire shop where the owner purchased a new mounting machine, and was followed by a visit to an electronics store owner named Abdul Al Rahman, who had bought two printers for his store.

Braud chatted with the businessman for a few minutes before moving back out to the busy streets.

The next stop, a clothing store owned by Morad Ayad, was brightly lit with colorful lights and an orange and white tiled ceiling.

Ayad, who was unsure how to continue his business, heard the U.S. was issuing microgrants. He turned in an application and was approved.

When Braud stopped at Asad Fadil Asad's satellite and cell phone repair store, he noted the new shelves and freshly painted walls. "These are the kinds of improvements I like to see," Braud said.

Plumbing store owner Khalid Mahmoud showed Braud the new generator and heavy drill he purchased with his grant money.

"I am a poor man and this shop helps," Ayad said. "It helps me to support my family, and that makes me very happy."

Braud's final stop was to the Al Barka market shop, a small convenience store owned by Ali Husain who purchased a new generator for his business.

Husain said he feels his shop is successful due to a large customer base and he has been able to hire at least seven employees.

"I'm very glad to get the money to start my store," Hussein said. "I had no money to start a store and the microgrant really helped me."

Husain, like many other shop owners Braud talked to that day, is thankful he has a successful business and can support his family.



Soldier's Medal earned for Heroic Rescue



By Spc. Anthony Jones
1st BDE, 25th Infantry Division

Diyala, Iraq – Trapped upside down inside a dark Stryker filling with cold water is a terrifying ordeal with a horrible fate for those inside. Only dedication to one another and the heroism of Soldiers prevented a catastrophe in mid December 2008.

Spc. Ricardo Farrell, of Annandale, Va., a member of 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, was put in such a situation.

Following the Army core values of personal courage, loyalty and selfless service, Farrell dove from the vehicle commander's seat of his Stryker swam through the flooded driver's hole to rescue the trapped driver and saved his life.

For his actions, Farrell was awarded the Soldier's Medal, an award presented to any person of the Armed Forces of the United States, or of a friendly foreign nation who, while serving in any capacity with the Army of the United States, distinguishes themselves by heroism not involving actual conflict with an enemy.

The night of December 22, 2008 Farrell's Stryker was part of a convoy headed out for a combat patrol; when an oncoming vehicle caused the driver of Farrell's Stryker to swerve and ultimately roll into a watery canal, leaving only a foot of breathable air in the rear of the Stryker.

"We hit the canal and started to slide to the right and the weight pulled the Stryker into the canal," said Farrell. "Next thing I know we are upside down and water is rushing in."

After righting himself in the vehicle and finding most of the crew in the back Farrell heard the shouts of his driver, trapped under his seat.

"I heard my driver yelling, he was screaming 'I don't want to die'. I heard him a couple more times then the yelling stopped," said Farrell.

Still wearing his own body armor, Farrell went through what Soldiers call the "Hell hole", a small opening between the crew compartment and drivers seat, and pulled the driver out. "I went under the Hell hole, but I couldn't reach him, I remember moving stuff out of the way and I was scared he had drowned."



"I grabbed him by his arm and body armor and pulled him out. I just didn't want my driver to die. That's the worst feeling anyone could have." Farrell was recognized for his heroism in a ceremony held on Forward Operating Base Warhorse. Brig. Gen. James C. Nixon, Deputy Commanding General – Operations, 25th Infantry Division,

presented Farrell with his medal. Also honored was Staff Sgt. Melvin Clark, from Minneapolis, Minn.

Clark was the first Soldier from another vehicle to reach the rolled Stryker and was able to open the doors allowing the trapped Soldiers to escape. Clark was awarded an Army Commendation Medal for his actions.

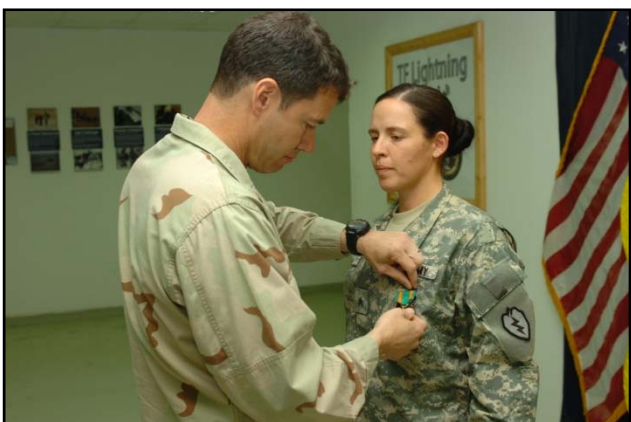
The first Soldier's medals were awarded Oct. 17, 1927 to John F. Burns and James P. Martin, for heroism during a fire and to James K. Wilson and Cleophas C. Burnett for saving people from drowning.

There have been just over 100 Soldiers Medals given after Sept. 11, 2001. One notable recipient, was Colin Powell in 1969.



Lightning Values: Selfless Service

TASK FORCE LIGHTNING - THROUGH THE LENS



U.S. Army photos courtesy of Task Force Lightning Public Affairs

SELFLESS SERVICE – There are countless stories behind what guided each Soldier's life path to service of country and military service overseas. Each of these stories is as individual as the person who lives it. Our Armed Forces are among the best in the world due to the pride, commitment and sacrifices of all men and women, our nation's sons and daughters, who raise their hands and pledge their willingness to dedicate their lives, a part of them, to help the people of our country and our national allies .

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

HEROES OF THE 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION



- Spc4 Daniel Fernandez
- Co. C, 1st Battalion (Mech), 5th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division
- Born: June 30, 1944
- Entered Service: Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Place of Action: Cu Chi, Hau Nghia Province
- Date of Action: February 18, 1966



Daniel Fernandez

Medal of Honor Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Spc4. Fernandez demonstrated indomitable courage when the patrol was ambushed by a Viet Cong rifle company and driven back by the intense enemy automatic weapons fire before it could evacuate an American soldier who had been wounded in the Viet Cong attack. Spc4. Fernandez, a sergeant and 2 other volunteers immediately fought their way through devastating fire and exploding grenades to reach the fallen soldier. Upon reaching their fallen comrade the sergeant was struck in the knee by machine gun fire and immobilized. Spc4. Fernandez took charge, rallied the left flank of his patrol and began to assist in the recovery of the wounded sergeant. While first aid was being administered to the wounded man, a sudden increase in the accuracy and intensity of enemy fire forced the volunteer group to take cover. As they did, an enemy grenade landed in the midst of the group, although some men did not see it. Realizing there was no time for the wounded sergeant or the other men to protect themselves from the grenade blast, Spc4. Fernandez vaulted over the wounded sergeant and threw himself on the grenade as it exploded, saving the lives of his 4 comrades at the sacrifice of his life. Spc4. Fernandez' profound concern for his fellow soldiers, at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty are in the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country.

•Awarded Posthumously

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Medal of Honor