



# Lightning Weekly

## Iraqis and U.S. Celebrate Sovereignty and Independence And Honor Soldiers' Sacrifices



Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division render honors behind a memorial display to Staff Sgt. Todd Olson as Iraqi policemen raise the Iraqi flag during a renaming and transition ceremony in Samarra, June 30. The patrol base was formerly known as Patrol Base Olson in honor of Olson, who died of wounds sustained during an attack in Samarra in Dec. 2006. The new name of the base is Fond'k Abo Hera, which means "Lake Hotel" in Arabic. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jazz Burney, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division Public Affairs)



# FROM THE DESK OF 'LIGHTNING 6'

## 4<sup>th</sup> of July Message to the Soldiers

As we take a moment to reflect on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, let us take this time, together, to pause and remember the sacrifices of those who came before us. Let us also pause and reflect upon the sacrifices being made right here, and right now, among the families at home and your brothers-in-arms to your left and right.

Let us also reflect upon the ultimate sacrifice some members of this Task Force have made in service to our Nation. America owes a debt of gratitude that can never be paid to all its service members, whose great sacrifices over the last 234 years have preserved freedom and liberty for all Americans.

Equally great is the sacrifice the families make each and every day supporting their service member, and that support is vital to the success of our mission.

The families are the foundation upon which Task Force Lightning is built, and we should take every opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude for their support.

Today's Army is unique from the Army of previous generations. We are an all-volunteer force, composed of men and women from across America. All of us made the decision to swear an oath to defend the Constitution. All of us, no matter where we came from, believe in our country and believe that the freedoms we secure for those we love are worth whatever sacrifice. I am honored to be a member of a professional brotherhood and sisterhood that has crafted the greatest land fighting force the world has ever known.

While we reflect upon our Independence Day, and what sacrifices those who came before made to preserve our freedom, liberty, and sovereignty, take a moment to think about the people of Iraq and what June 30<sup>th</sup> means to them. Because of your hard work and effective training, you have given the Iraqi Security Forces the tools and the training they need to succeed. Today, Iraqis have hope for their future and their sovereignty.

Task Force Lightning has transitioned from combat operations within the cities and villages of Iraq to supporting the Iraqi Security Forces as they protect their own cities. Outside the cities, we will continue to conduct full spectrum operations – by, with and through the ISF. Partnered with the ISF, together we will establish a layered defense with Iraqis securing the cities, and our own combat forces securing the borders and rural areas eliminating safe havens for foreign fighters.

This is a fundamental shift in the way we operate. Not only is it a change in mission, it is a change in mindset. All operations in Iraq need to be conducted with complete transparency, full coordination and open communication with our Iraqi partners, at all levels. As our deployment continues, Iraqis will lead operations more and more. The ISF are ready – this is the right time for them to realize their own dreams of a sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq.

As we begin our planning preparations for the return home, continue what you have been doing this entire deployment. Complete the mission, stay in contact with your family, and support them as much as possible. Keep your eye on the prize, and remain focused on the mission, until the day we depart for home. Finish this deployment as we started it, together and strong.



**Major General Robert L. Caslen Jr.**

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



# Blackjack assists Iraqis Rebuilding Taza



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

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, IRAQ** – The city of Taza in Kirkuk province, Iraq, continued its recovery efforts after a devastating explosion from a truck bomb.

Representatives from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, and Kirkuk's Provincial Reconstruction Team traveled to Taza June 27 to assist in the recovery.

Capt. Nathan Jennings, a Palmer, Alaska native and commander of Company C, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd BCT, met with Mayor Talib of Taza.

According to Jennings, the purpose of the visit was to assess the security situation in the city, deliver much needed

water, and examine a tent city that was established using tents donated by the Turkish government and several non-governmental organizations for displaced residents who lost their homes in the blast.

"The town has been feeding at least 3,000 people a day since the blast to accommodate the family members and friends who came to attend funerals," Jennings said. "We brought the water to make sure the visitors had enough."

Mayor Talib, who has worked on recovery efforts since the attack, said water lines leading to the destroyed homes have been temporarily repaired and water to the city has been restored.

The tent city was erected by the Iraqi Army in a field near the town. The Iraqi soldiers will establish a field kitchen to feed the victims and a fence for additional security. According to Taza officials, the tents will also be furnished with furniture and already have electricity.

"The tents have electricity for a portion of the day and will have power 24 hours a day shortly," Talib said.

Chris Jennings, the Kirkuk PRT representative, offered his agency's assistance in the recovery as well.

"The PRT is here to help facilitate Taza's needs through the civilian sector," Jennings said.

With much of the debris removed from the blast site, reconstruction and rebuilding homes was top priority during the meeting.

"In the coming weeks, we can start looking at offering micro grants to help businesses that were damaged in the attack rebuild," Jennings said.

According to Talib, the families of those killed in the blast would receive 2 million Iraqi dinars and those wounded would receive 1 million Iraqi dinars, while the Government of Iraq has earmarked U.S. \$5 million for rebuilding residential homes in Taza.

Talib, who also is on the reconstruction and humanitarian committee, said there was a plan to rebuild in place and that it would take up to a year to complete.

"If terrorists knew this explosion would have unified Arabs, Turks, and Christians, they wouldn't have done it," Talib said. "It has united us!"



Capt. Nathan Jennings (center), a Palmer, Alaska native and commander of Company C, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, meets with Talib (right), the mayor of Taza, June 27, to discuss recovery efforts in the city Taza, Kirkuk province, Iraq, following a truck bomb attack June 20. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Douglas, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs)



# New provincial leader works to strengthen relationship with US Engineers



**STORY AND PHOTO BY**  
**Spc. Jazz Burney**  
 3<sup>rd</sup> IBCT, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division

**CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, TIKRIT, Iraq** – Seated around a conference table in the United States Army Corps of Engineers regional headquarters here, the Salah ad-Din Province Deputy Governor met U.S. forces and USACE engineers June 29, to strengthen their working relationship and discuss upcoming projects to improve the lives of the people of the province.

Thanks to the vastly improved security situation in the province, the new provincial government is able to shift focus from security to civil reconstruction projects that will benefit a large percentage of the population.

"This [meeting] was an opportunity to open a channel of communication between us for the benefit of Salah ad-Din," said Ahmed Abed al-Jabar, the first deputy governor of Salah ad-Din province.

He expressed his happiness at the meeting, where he received a briefing on past, ongoing and future projects for the province.

"We will have better results at the start of our projects due to the additional insight the Iraqi personnel bring to the table," said Glenn Myrick, resident engineer, USACE.

The goal is to strengthen engineering relationships between the project and U.S. forces to incorporate more frequent communication during the project lifecycle, not just at the start and finish of a project.

Myrick said this would give the provincial leaders more confidence that the projects are being handled correctly.

"I know that having Iraqi leaders' input is essential because they know the terrain of Iraq and have adapted to the environment," said Capt. Justin King, the commander's emergency response program manager, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

"Having local civil engineers on the ground talking to our civil engineers is a sure way for detailed information to be conveyed in a correct manner," he added.

At the end of the meeting, Myrick expressed optimism at the direction the new leadership of Salah ad-Din is taking for its citizens.

"[The meeting] shows that he is committed to taking the necessary actions in order to build a better Iraq for his fellow Iraqis," said Myrick.

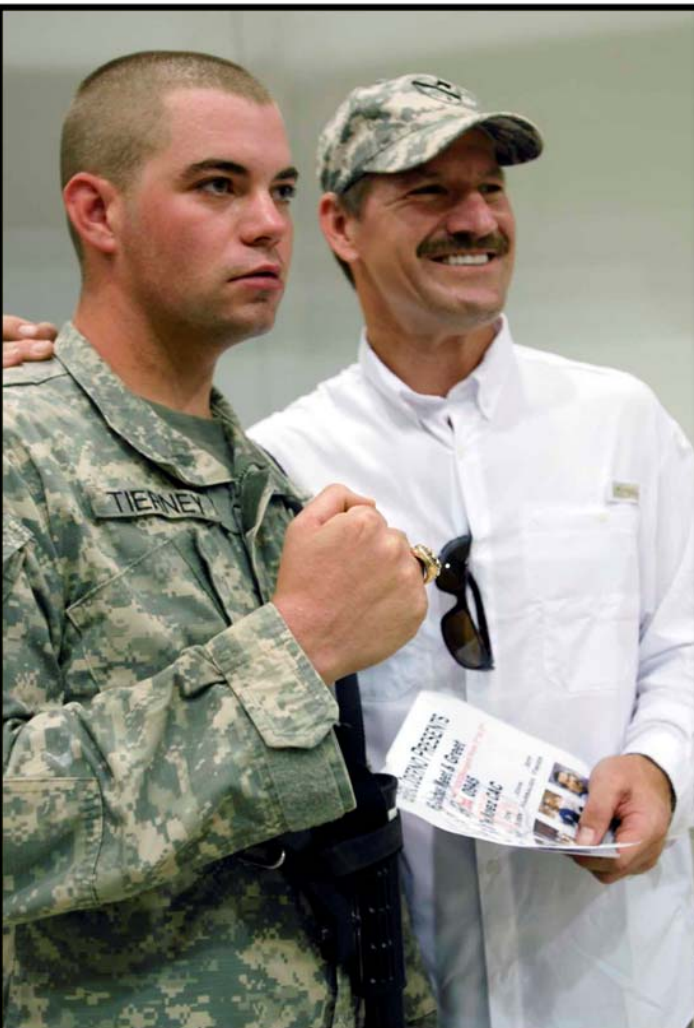
Ahmed Abed al-Jabar, the first deputy governor of Salah ad-Din Province, writes down information concerning civil reconstruction projects during a meeting with Coalition forces and civil engineers at the United States Army Core of Engineers regional headquarters, June 29. Ahmed met with the USACE engineers to establish a direct working relationship and discuss upcoming projects to improve the lives of the people of the province. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jazz Burney, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division Public Affairs)



# NFL Coaches Tour Stops by GreyWolves stomping grounds



PHOTOS BY  
Pfc. Sharla Perrin  
3<sup>rd</sup> HBCT, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division



**MOSUL, Iraq** — Pfc. Sean Tierney, an infantryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd "Greywolf" Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division and native of Providence, R.I., poses with Bill Cowher, the former National Football League head coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers, on Forward Operating Base Marez July 2. Besides Cowher, four other NFL coaches visited Greywolf troops as part of their tour of the country.

**MOSUL, Iraq** — Sgt. Jeffery Balandra, with A Co., 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd "Greywolf" Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division and a native of Killeen, Texas, poses for a photo holding the shoulder sleeve insignia he had signed by Tom Coughlin, the National Football League head coach of the New York Giants, who visited troops at Forward Operating Base Marez July 2 as part of a tour of the country with four other NFL coaches.





# “Celebration of Sovereignty” Day Jubilee in Diyala Province



**STORY BY**  
**Sgt. Jeremy Pitcher**  
*1st SBCT, 25 ID Public Affairs Office*

**DIYALA, Iraq** – The Diyala government held a “celebration of sovereignty,” with a parade June 29 in Diyala’s capital city of Baqubah to commemorate the dedication and sacrifice of Iraqi Security and U.S. forces.

The event was held to honor both groups who worked together to defeat the insurgency and quell previous violence in the province, and to celebrate the progress Iraqi Security Forces have made towards providing stability and security in the region.

The parade included more than 2000 marching Iraqi police officers as well as police vehicles, S.W.A.T trucks, and fire engines. After the parade, several IPs provided demonstrations, one that featured police personnel controlling a rioting crowd, as well as a robot able to diffuse bombs.

The robot was operated by IP Explosive Ordinance Disposal personnel.

Using the robot to remove the detonator from the “bomb,” the IP EOD technician walked into the area wearing a protective bomb suit to



An Iraqi explosive ordinance disposal soldier diffuses a mock bomb during a demonstration during Baqubah’s “Celebration of Sovereignty” in Diyala Province, Iraq, June 29, 2009. The day’s events included a parade celebrating the progress the Iraqi Security Forces have made towards providing stability and security in the region, as well as their new role in taking over all responsibility for security in the province’s cities. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sergeant Ali E. Flisek)

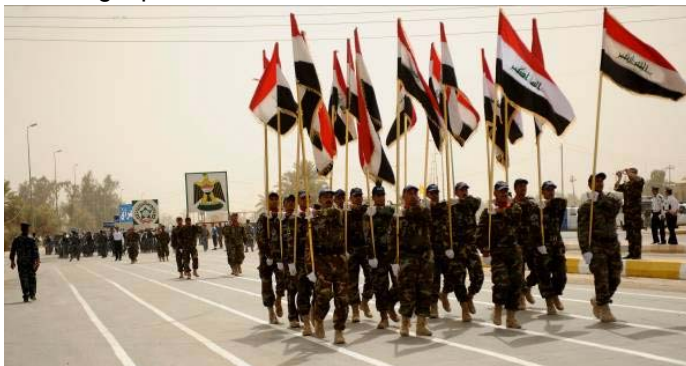
cut several wires to completely neutralize the threat.

The local IP soccer team also made an appearance during the event. The 19 members carried soccer balls as they marched down the street.

“You saw the chaos our country went through after the fall of the former regime, but in spite of Al Qaeda being in the country, our sons believed the victory was coming.

“You lived under those difficult circumstances and won against the enemies of freedom with security forces and the elections were proof for that,” said Talib Mohammad Hassan, the Provincial Council Chief.

Also in attendance for the festivities was the current governor of Diyala, Abd-al-Nasir al-Mahdawi, as well as many local prominent sheikhs and leaders.




Thousands of Iraqi police marched through the streets of Baqubah during the “Celebration of Sovereignty” in Diyala Province, Iraq, June 29, 2009. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sergeant Ali E. Flisek)



Diyala governor Abd-al-Nasir al-Mahdawi shakes hands with the Diyala Director of Police during Baqubah’s “Celebration of Sovereignty” in Diyala Province, Iraq, June 29, 2009. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sergeant Ali E. Flisek)

# The many professions of PFC Patton



TASK FORCE  
LIGHTNING

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

**CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq** – For many Soldiers, life before the Army stems from a small, quiet hometown and for others, life before the Army began in a bustling cityscape or rural town.

For Pfc. John Patton, a native of the island of Kwajalein Atoll, within the Marshall Islands, life before the Army began in an entirely different country.

The child of a natural-born American citizen, Patton spent the first 11 years of his life in the Marshall Islands before his father's job moved the family to the U.S.

"After moving to the U.S., I lived there for 10 years before moving back to the Marshall Islands," Patton said.

Accepting a job with a government-run fishery, Patton moved back to the Marshall Islands, a move which he wanted to do for some time before.

"I went to Japan for fishery training, quality control training and solar panel refrigeration technical training," said Patton.

"We used solar power to generate power on the islands because there wasn't as much electricity there," Patton said. "I worked as a technician with the systems, keeping them maintained."

In addition to maintaining the solar panels involved in the refrigeration of the fish, Patton served as a quality control supervisor.

"I would inspect the reef fish," Patton said. "All it takes is one bad fish to ruin the whole cooler."

Overall, the four years spent working for the hatchery were fulfilling to Patton, but, with a growing family to consider, Patton chose to move on.

"I enjoyed it, but I had to quit because my wife and I were having our

first kid, and the payment wasn't enough," said Patton. "My next job paid three times as much."

Patton found work with a large American defense contractor internationally based on the islands.

"My contract was renewed yearly, before the position I was working in was phased out," Patton said.

"I may have stood on if I could have." Working through his six-year contract,

Patton, who at the time was attending a training course for teachers, to speak with him about a possible future in the U.S. military.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime decision," Patton said. "I was one month away from my 36<sup>th</sup> birthday; 35 was, at the time, the age limit on enlisting."

With his decision time limited, Patton made the decision, on the spot, to enlist as a signal support systems specialist and found himself on his way back to the

U.S. for initial Army training.

"I had to think of a way to explain everything to my wife as I was driving home," he admitted. "Basically, I had 13 days, from the day I decided to join, to when I arrived at Fort Benning for basic training."

Despite concerns of being unable to adequately keep pace with the physical requirement, Patton proved to himself that he was more than capable of being a U.S. Army Soldier. "I had thought about joining the Army

sometimes, but I thought I was too old," said Patton. "I thought it would be more physical, but I didn't have too much trouble."

The physical challenges were soon presented to Patton upon arriving to the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division for his first assignment.

Patton now serves Company A, 25<sup>th</sup> Special Troop Battalion, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division while attached to Headquarters Support Company, 25<sup>th</sup> STB, 25<sup>th</sup> Inf. Div. as a mailroom attendant.

Working in the mailroom while at Schofield Barracks, Patton did not expect the workload to increase as dramatically as it had upon deploying to Contingency Operating Base Speicher, late November 2008.

"The Christmas mail surge was nuts!" said Patton.

During the holiday season, personnel serving on COB Speicher received an increased amount of mail, packaged gifts, and care packages. Patton, and the mail crew, for which he serves daily,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)



Pfc. John Patton (courtesy photo)

Patton then moved on to a teaching position at a private school.

There, he furthered his education, taking on the challenge of mastering the English language.

"I liked teaching," Patton said, smiling. "I taught English at the 11<sup>th</sup> grade level, mainly grammar, spelling, and everything else."

Content with the job in which he found himself, Patton never could have imagined a 'once in a lifetime opportunity' would present itself, during spring of 2005, through the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test.

"Some recruiters came to the islands to offer ASVAB testing for our students," explained Patton.

"I took the test alongside my students for fun and I did very well." Weeks later, after the results had been processed, the visiting U.S. Army recruiters located





A group of the Iraqi Army's 16th Brigade soldiers march into Matar al-Saddiq for the base renaming ceremony June 29. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Angie Johnston)



Soldiers from the Iraqi Army's 16th Brigade stand in formation next to their Coalition forces counterparts during a base renaming ceremony at Matar al-Saddiq June 29. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Angie Johnston)



Lt. Col. Chris Stenman, commander of the Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, restates his battalion's mission of partnership with Iraqi Security Forces during a base renaming ceremony at Matar al-Saddiq June 29. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Angie Johnston)

# Renaming Ceremony restores Iraqi tradition, honors fallen



STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
Sgt. Angie Johnston  
3rd IBCT, 25th Infantry Division

**MATAR AL-SADDIQ, TUZ, Iraq** – As part of the comprehensive plan to transition security responsibilities to Iraqi control, U.S. forces, Tuz Security Forces and members of the local government held a base renaming ceremony here June 29.

Lt. Col. Chris Stenman, commander of the Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division and Brig. Gen. Hewa Ahmed Star, commander of the Iraqi Army's 16th Brigade celebrated the return of Forward Operating Base Bernstein back to its original name – Matar al-Saddiq.

The renaming ceremony began with a memorial to 1st Lt. David Bernstein and Pfc. John Hart, who lost their lives during an insurgent attack Oct. 18, 2003, in nearby Taza. Bernstein was posthumously awarded the Army's Silver Star for gallantry in action; both Iraqi and U.S. forces bowed their heads in silence to honor the two fallen Soldiers.

"1st Lt. Bernstein selflessly worked to save another wounded Soldier instead of seeking care for himself," said Stenman.

"In remembrance of his heroic deed, we honored his memory by referring to this place in his name."

Stenman also reinforced the Special Troops Battalion's new mission in the Tuz, Qada, the safety and security of

the Iraqi people through the ISF.

As a condition of the Security Agreement, all U.S. combat forces moved out of cities by June 30.

Stenman's troops will remain at Matar al-Saddiq under Hewa's invitation; they will continue working with ISF at the request of the local Iraqi government.

"The future here – the strength here – is built on the expanding leadership and direction of the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi Security Forces... so as our mission changes, our commitment to our partners remains enduring," said Stenman.

Lt. Col. Khalid Haaji Mohammad of the IA's 16th Bde. also addressed guests to assure them that the future of Tuz lies in ISF's hands.

He also described partnership operations that CF will continue with both the IA and Iraqi Police in the near future.

The STB has been partnering with the Tuz City Council and other key leaders to improve the living conditions, governance and security of the entire Qada for several months.

"This morning, we proudly begin using the original name Matar al-Saddiq to refer to a location where Iraqi and Coalition Forces stand together in partnership.

I'm proud to serve alongside these Soldiers – Iraqi and American – in support of the example of Iraq presented by the great people of Tuz and Salah ad-Din," said Stenman.

## U.S. Army 1st Lt. David R. Bernstein

U.S. Army 1st Lt. David R. Bernstein, 24, of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, was killed in action in Taza, Iraq, when enemy forces ambushed his patrol using rocket propelled grenades and small arms fire.

He was assigned to 1st Battalion (Airborne), 508th Infantry Regiment, 173rd Infantry Brigade, Camp Ederle, Italy.

Died on October 18, 2003





# LIGHTNING HERO OF THE WEEK

**NAME: SPC MIGUEL RIVERA**  
**UNIT: HHC 1-12 CAV, TASK FORCE ABLE**  
**HOMETOWN: HARDINGER, TX**

While on patrol in Ljahal village, the platoon was informed of a recent explosion outside the residence of a local villager. An Iraqi man had sustained injuries to his right hand, head and shoulders from the blast.

Spc. Rivera evaluated the man and rendered medical treatment. His actions assisted in winning favor with the people of the village.

If Spc. Rivera had not treated the wounded civilian, the man would have lost his hand. In thanks for medical assistance provided, the man provided information to help the Soldiers find terrorists in the village.



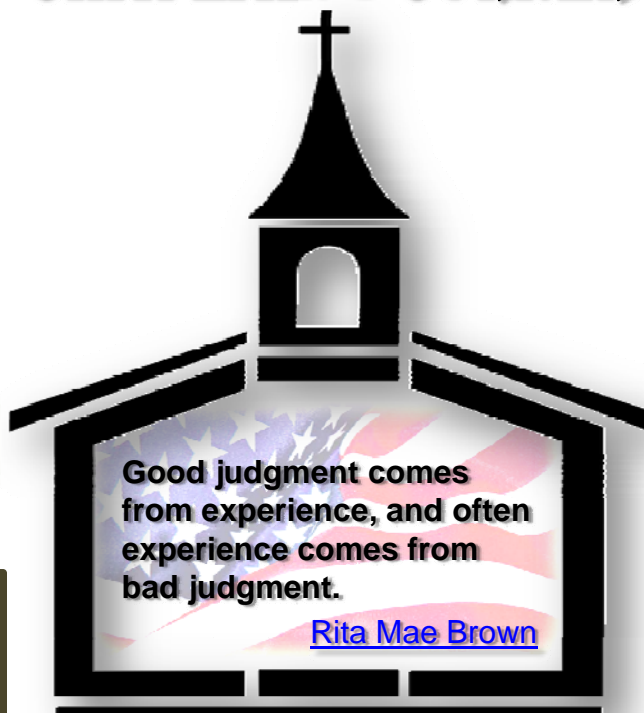
## IRAQ FACTS

- What was the first form of written communications?  
*Cuneiform*
- What is the Shatt Al Arab?  
*The delta, waterway, that is at the head of the Persian Gulf*
- How do you say "What's up?" in Arabic...  
*"Shako Makoo"*
- What is one fruit Iraq exports?  
*dates or "tamar"*

Some Information compiled from Worldfactbook

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

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



Good judgment comes from experience, and often experience comes from bad judgment.

[Rita Mae Brown](#)



Spc. Brandon Brown, an Atlanta native and food service specialist with 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, stirs a pot of shrimp in preparation for a meal at Forward Operating Base McHenry, Kirkuk province, Iraq, June 14. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Douglas, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs)



Spc. Robert Mullenix, Chicago native, and Sgt. Edward Leak of Newport News, Va., both food service specialists with 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, grill steaks at Forward Operating Base McHenry, Kirkuk province, Iraq, in preparation for the Army birthday meal, June 14. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Douglas, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs)

# The Band of Bakers



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

## FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq –

Soldiers assigned to Forward Operating Base McHenry near the Iraqi city of Hawijah, in Kirkuk province, Iraq do not have the luxury of eating at a dining facility staffed with contractors.

Food service specialists at FOB McHenry assigned to 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd BCT, 1st Cavalry Division, are but a few of 2nd BCT's cooks who actually perform duties specific to their military occupational specialty.

According to Staff Sgt. George Crocker, Chesapeake, Va. native and the senior food operations sergeant at FOB McHenry, a military dining facility needs to serve at least 1,000 personnel to be staffed by contractors, with just fewer than 900, McHenry's DFAC doesn't qualify.

But, for Crocker this isn't a problem, because cooking is a lifelong passion.

"When I was younger I used to watch my father—who was a chef—so cooking was something I wanted to pursue," Crocker said. "I have always enjoyed cooking."

Crocker, a 13-year Army veteran and his 'band of bakers,' composed of 14 food specialists, are the only thing keeping the nearly 900 service members and personnel assigned to FOB McHenry fed.

"We run four meals a day with a staff of 14 Soldiers, which is nine Soldiers short of what I should have," Crocker said.

Crocker, who serves as the McHenry DFAC manager and handles administrative issues for his Soldiers, orders all the food to support a 21-menu cycle.

"We receive shipments from FOB Warrior every four days," Crocker said.

According to Crocker, he often receives questions from folks back home about the types of food he prepares for Soldiers in Iraq.

"We have anything from lasagna to chicken," Crocker said. "And for special occasions like the Army birthday we can prepare steaks and shrimp." For the Army birthday, Crocker and his team prepared a feast fit for kings. With grilled steaks, lobster tail, shrimp, Cornish game hens, and an assortment of side dishes.

On the grill were food service specialists Spc. Rob Mullenix, Chicago native and Sgt. Edward Leak of Newport News, Va.

"This is the best job in the Army. It's long hours, but I get to focus on the job," Mullenix said. "But, you got to be the right kind of person to be in his job." Crocker said it also takes the right personality. "You have to have the right type of personality for this to be able to deal with so many people," explained Crocker.

**(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 PAGE)**



# **(PATTON)**

processed an enormous amount of mail for HHC and several additional supporting units.

"We'd process eight to fifteen pallets of mail each day," said Patton, describing the Christmas mail surge. "A pallet can hold up to 1,000 boxes and more than 50 percent of the mail were care packages."

Ultimately, Patton did not mind the strenuous workload, as his efforts helped to lift the spirits of personnel serving on COB Speicher.

"It was all for the troops," Patton said. "It was all for the morale of everybody, so it was good."

With his deployment to support Operation Iraqi Freedom, Patton finds the most difficult aspect of his service in Iraq is being apart from his loved ones.

"I've never been away from them before," said Patton. "Being away from my wife, my three boys and girl is the most challenging part of this."

Patton realizes his principle reason for enlisting with the U.S. Army lies with the support of his family and the futures of his children.

"The main reason I joined was for my family," said Patton. "I wanted to get them off of the island so they could get a better education."

Supporting the ones he loves, and the Soldiers who serve beside him, Patton continues to experience a variety of careers paths and gain know-how through professional training.

For Soldiers like Patton, life before the Army can be as bountiful as a future with the Army.



# **(BAKERS)**

Mullenix, who has been cooking for the U.S. Army for 5 years, is on his second deployment with 2nd BCT and enjoys the camaraderie of being in such a tight group of Soldiers.

"We are around the same group of guys and gals, we are one big family," Mullenix said. "We are only as good as the worst cook, and we like to shine."

While preparing the steaks, Leak accidentally dropped a steak in the fire.

"If you don't burn the first steak you're doing something wrong," Crocker jokingly said to Leak.

A friendly competition exists between Jamaica native Staff Sgt. Nathan Sutherland and Leak who, according to Sutherland, is the "official grill sergeant."

"There aren't too many people I give credit to," Sutherland said. "But, [Leak] is the best."

Following each meal, the cooks all retreat to a small break room near the back of McHenry's DFAC for a friendly game of darts or cards. Rest is a must since, according to Crocker, by the time he and his food specialists leave Iraq they will have served more than 756,000 meals.

Life after Army retirement won't be completely devoid of food for Crocker. He hopes to own his own business one day.

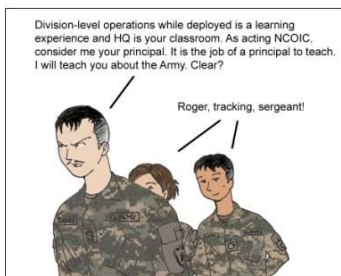
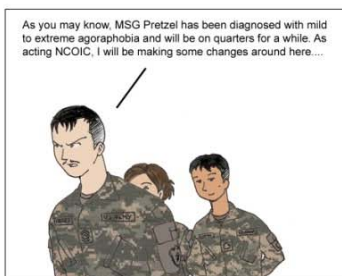
"Hopefully when I retire I can own and operate a Jazz lounge geared towards serving older patrons," Crocker said.

"Something a little upscale but reasonable to go and have a relaxing time with the wife."

## **In the Army .... NOW!**

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

### **Episode 04: A Trial Reviled!**



Join us next week for Episode 05: A Bird in the Hand!



# ***TASK FORCE LIGHTNING - THROUGH THE LENS***



## **U.S. Air Force photos by Staff Sgt. Luke P. Thelen, Joint Combat Camera**

**Validation Demonstration/Ceremony:** The Provincial Police Validation Ceremony in Al Alam, Iraq, June 29, marked the official hand over of full control of security responsibilities to the Al Alam Provincial Police department and certified that its officers have passed the required training to take on this task. The Iraqi policemen demonstrated search and seizure procedures and their ability to react to an attack. U.S. Army Maj. Cliff Harris, Executive Officer for 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division spoke to civic leaders, local sheikhs, and other guests in attendance. Children emulated the strength shown by their newly certified local policeman.

Do you have a great photo from your time serving OIF? Send your images to us at [mndnpao@25id.army.mil](mailto:mndnpao@25id.army.mil)



# HEROES OF THE 25<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION



- 2 LT Sudut, Jerome A.
- Co. B, 27th Infantry
- Born: March 11, 1949
- Entered Service: Kansas City, Missouri
- Place of Action: Near Kumhwa, Republic of Vietnam
- Date of Action: 12 September 1951

## Medal of Honor Citation:

**Citation:** 2d Lt. Sudut distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry above and beyond the call of duty in action against the enemy. His platoon, attacking heavily fortified and strategically located hostile emplacements, had been stopped by intense fire from a large bunker containing several firing posts. Armed with submachinegun, pistol, and grenades, 2d Lt. Sudut charged the emplacement alone through vicious hostile fire, killing 3 of the occupants and dispersing the remainder. Painfully wounded, he returned to reorganize his platoon, refused evacuation and led his men in a renewed attack. The enemy had returned to the bunker by means of connecting trenches from other emplacements and the platoon was again halted by devastating fire. Accompanied by an automatic-rifleman 2d Lt. Sudut again charged into close-range fire to eliminate the position. When the rifleman was wounded, 2d Lt. Sudut seized his weapon and continued alone, killing 3 of the 4 remaining occupants. Though mortally wounded and his ammunition exhausted, he jumped into the emplacement and killed the remaining enemy soldier with his trench knife. His single-handed assaults so inspired his comrades that they continued the attack and drove the enemy from the hill, securing the objective. 2d Lt. Sudut's consummate fighting spirit, outstanding leadership, and gallant self-sacrifice are in keeping with the finest traditions of the infantry and the U.S. Army.

\* Awarded Posthumously

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