

July 2009

Call of the WOLF



Volume 1, Issue 9

The Wolf's Howl

Greetings to the combat tested Warriors of the Arctic Wolves and to the entire team dedicated to the mission here in Diyala Province, Iraq.

By the time you read this, we will be in the 11th month of our deployment and I have one request of every Warrior in this brigade combat team – **FINISH STRONG!**

We started this journey on 11 September 2008 with our Deployment Ceremony at Fort Wainwright. We survived the long flight to Kuwait, the initial training, and the painful movement into Iraq and occupation of our sectors in Diyala Province. From day one we started this operational deployment strong and we will finish our combat operations, redeployment and reintegration strong.

The words *Finish Strong* instantly and clearly communicate a performance goal perhaps better than any other two words in the English language. We have all shared a common value and goal – the ability to perform and desire to overcome every obstacle in our path and ultimately to **Finish Strong**.

What does *Finishing Strong* mean to you? To me *Finishing Strong* is

an attitude. An attitude that drives us to finish this mission with the same intensity, energy, and enthusiasm as we had in the beginning. It takes both mental and physical toughness to fight with the same fire at the beginning of our deployment as it does now. Motivation and focus at this period of the deployment can be hard for Soldiers and Leaders. We must all persevere and find new ways to discipline and motivate ourselves and our teams.

I believe in *Finishing Strong*. A Soldier's success is not assessed on the day they started achieving, the day they partially achieved, or the day they agreed to achieve to their own standard. A Soldier is truly a victorious champion when they have *Finished Strong* at accomplishing a mission. With the finish line just weeks away, don't just coast through, power through the challenges and transitions that face us.

Regardless of what challenges we have faced, or great feats we have accomplished, what matters most is how we choose to respond to the challenge in front of us.

The good news is that the light is at the end of the tunnel. We



are almost there. Do not allow yourself to lose focus to become complacent or to lower your standards. Arctic Wolves - will you stay focused and fight until the end? The choice is ultimately yours. Challenge yourself to not just finish but to **FINISH STRONG!**

Again, I thank you all for what you have done, are doing and will continue to do for this Stryker Brigade Combat Team, our Army, and our great Nation. Be safe, stay true to yourselves, to each other and always serve with honor!

The Wolf



Notes From Wolf 7

Greetings from Diyala, Iraq! As we enter the last 60 days of our deployment, we must stay focused with the task at hand; reflect on all the accomplishments and success we have achieved in the last ten months, and we must finish strong. We will be remembered for the last event, achievement or not. We must continue to enforce safety and Army values through the Battle Buddy concept at the point of the spear; leadership at the lowest level.

As the TORCH and ADVON redeploy to set the conditions for success at Fort Wainwright, know that the Rear-D and our Family members are also preparing and setting the conditions for our return. We have a responsibility to ensure that we are also setting the conditions here. We must not relax the standards and/or the systems we have established. We know the Battle Buddy concept works - do not dissolve it, maintain it and continue to enforce it in Garrison. Leading in Garrison is no different than leading in combat; both have risks. We are Soldiers 24/7 in combat and in Garrison, we must continue to care for each other and conduct everything as a team/unit, a "Wolf Pack."

Without confusing the task at hand, plan ahead and use the "Prepare, Polite, Professional" model in the same way we conduct business in combat. We have an individual and leader responsibility to prepare ourselves, Soldiers, and Families. Ask yourself, "What

have I done to set the conditions for success?" Finishing strong with our mission here in Diyala is a very important part of our deployment, maintaining strong after redeployment is the end-state. We cannot allow the great success that we have achieved in combat to be shadowed by an unsafe act or substandard behavior now or in Garrison. Know and understand yourself, our Soldiers, and our Family; understand that our Families have also experienced stress and situations that have changed their lives. These changes require understanding and a well thought out reintegration plan; for example, the Battle Mind. The Battle Mind is not an illness, it's what we had to do to adapt to our combat environment and make required changes. It is no different than what our love ones had to do; they adapt and made changes while we are deployed.

Leaders, we have a responsibility to our Soldiers; help to understand the change we had to make in combat and the changes our Families had to make to adapt to the environment. This will only happen with "Leadership at the Point of the Spear", "Hands-On-Leadership," "Leader Emphasis," "Leader Involvement," and "Leader Inspiring Influence."

Per our NCO Creed second stanza: **"Competence is my watchword. My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind -**



accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my Soldiers. I will strive to remain tactically and technically proficient. I am aware of my role as a Noncommissioned Officer. I will fulfill my responsibilities inherent in that role. All Soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership. I know my Soldiers and I will always place their needs above my own. I will communicate consistently with my Soldiers and never leave them uninformed. I will be fair and impartial when recommending both rewards and punishment."

Leaders, COL Thompson and I challenge you to be an inspiring leader, an effective leader that set the condition for success. Continue to enforce the Battle Buddy concept, safety and the Army Values, many blessings to you all and your Families



Wolf 7



Sgt. Eric Kay yells the instruction to fire the 81MM mortar during a live fire mortar demonstration for Iraqi army personnel by U.S. Soldiers from Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, June 28, 2009 (U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Kirk Worley)

On the Cover

Spc. Jacob Sanders preps his oxy-acetylene torch to cut apart railings on a guard tower that was taken down to be moved, July 23. Sanders is a member of the Forward Maintenance Company, 25th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division (U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Kirk Worley)



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Combined operation a major step

Story by Sgt. Jeremy Pitcher
145th MPAD
Photos by Staff Sgt. Ali Flisek

Once a stronghold for insurgency activity, Balad Ruz and the surrounding region within Diyala has quieted quite a bit in recent months. This subtle, but extraordinary turnaround came on the collective backs of personnel from both the Iraqi Security Forces and Soldiers assigned to Task Force 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment.

Since taking over an area of southern Diyala province earlier in the year, 3-66 AR Soldiers, themselves part of the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, weathered some fairly considerable kinetic operations while fighting a heavy insurgency presence in the area.

On May 1, Soldiers of TF 3-66 began the operation of “putting the nail in the coffin” of the insurgency in the region with the joint operation “Glad Tidings of Benevolence II”.

The operation brought together the Soldiers of 3-66 with their Iraqi Army counterpart, the



U.S. Army soldiers from Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, attached to 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division and Iraqi Emergency Response Forces, search for insurgents in the neighborhood of Hawash al Basania, in Balad Ruz, Iraq on May 12th

Iraqi Army’s 21st Brigade.

To give their combined force more firepower, they also received the expertise and assistance of an additional two IA brigades.

During the nearly six-week operation, the 3-66 took a different role than what had been previously needed of them in the past. This time, the Iraqi forces were in

the lead, while U.S. Soldiers aided them in patrolling the area and running clearing missions.

“This operation allowed the Iraqi Security Forces and us to do so much that we wouldn’t have been able to accomplish without manpower that we received. We were able to validate that the area was clear of the insurgency that had previously held it, and start the process of bringing back essential services to the area,” said Maj. David Krzycki, TF 3-66 Operations Officer.

Another major goal of the operation was to encourage the Iraqi Security Forces leadership to plan, coordinate and execute the operation.



Sgt. William Fugok from Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, attached to the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, in Maala, Iraq on May 13th.

Step forward in southern Diyala



Soldiers from Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, attached to the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, in Maala, Iraq on May 13th

“The goal was to allow them to take the reins. They did a great job of communicating not just down, but upwards to commands, and sideways with other battalions and divisions,” said Krzycki.

Taking the lead the Iraqi forces were able to produce tangible success with over 450 suspected insurgents and terrorists being detained province-wide.

Coalition forces aided in this combined operation by allowing the Iraqi forces the opportunity to utilize U.S. enablers like air assets and explosive ordinance disposal, assets that the Iraqi forces often lack.

“They had great success in not only clearing the area but

doing it with no friendly fire incidents. They showed us just how far they’ve come,” said Capt. Michael Kay, Commander of Blackjack Company, TF 3-66.

Along with the combat missions of GTOB II, the joint force worked on improving the lives of the residents in southern Diyala through civil affairs projects, humanitarian aid, and the building of strong relationships with the people of the area.

“The real success story is that the government of Iraq can now come in and provide the services that people need. This will provide the ultimate security for the area,” said Kay.

After the operation came to

a close in June, members from both sides of the joint force looked to the great achievements and progress that were made over the nearly six-week event.

For the Iraqi Security Forces, this operation brought them one step closer to being able to run major operations, completely independent of Coalition help. For the Soldiers of TF 3-66 it was a testament to what they had worked so hard for since arriving in Diyala.

“This is a great success for all of us. It shows that all of the hours (and) training...have really paid off. This will be a symbol of our success long after we are gone,” said Krzycki.

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Family Separation Allowance
As of Oct. 14, 2008 service members married to other service members with children and both deployed will be entitled to FSA. Both service members must reside at the same location prior to deployment.

Recon Platoon, 1-5 IN trains Emergency Response Force

Story by Spc. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD
Photos provided by 1-5 IN

A graduation ceremony held June 3 marked the culmination of months of cooperation between Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces.

Recon platoon, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, a unit which mission includes source driven raids across the battalion's area of operations in Diyala, was in need of a dedicated ISF partner.

"With the new security agreement we could no longer perform unilateral operations after January," said Capt. Mario Anthony Cicconetti, commander, Recon Platoon. "So we began pairing up with local police stations and Emergency Response Force battalions."

Cicconetti said due to the nature

of his platoon's mission they do not have their own battle space like the companies of the 1-5 IN, creating the problem of not having a constant ISF partner.

"We ran into the problem where we were pulling guys the companies were going to use for patrols," said Cicconetti. "I approached the battalion commander with the idea of getting a good group of guys who are competent and want to do our type of mission."

Lt. Col. Shawn Reed, commander of the 1-5 IN, worked with the commander of the ERF to create a 14 man ERF platoon. The platoon was created using ERF soldiers from the ERF headquarters and the 2nd ERF Battalion.

Once Recon Platoon was partnered with the ERF platoon, they started to train them in basic soldiering skills and pre-mission procedures ranging from pre-combat inspections to ramp briefings and mission rehearsals.

"They started off on the side

lines watching us do our pre-combat checks and as we continued they began performing their own rehearsals," said Cicconetti. "Their leaders and platoon sergeants stepped up and took the lead."

Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Velasquez, platoon sergeant, Recon Platoon, said as the two platoons trained and worked together he saw the ERF's platoon sergeants take on their role, becoming the trainers and conducted their own training providing a chance for the Soldiers of Recon Platoon to act as observers and help guide the ERF when needed.

"In the beginning we had to do a lot of explaining why we do things the way we do them. Things like positioning them to establish proper security," said Velasquez. "When we started doing raids they really wanted to catch the suspect and they knew exactly where to look to find hiding spots."

Both Cicconetti and Velasquez said they were proud to be able to work with and train the ERF platoon which over time became more and more proficient in intelligence gathering, mission planning and ability to carry out successful raids.

Cicconetti said most of the missions after the June 3 graduation and the June 30 deadline for Coalition Forces to be withdrawn from cities were not U.S. led missions. They were missions planned by the ERF with information they had gathered themselves with Recon Platoon assisting.

"It makes us proud because we know they care," said Cicconetti. "They care enough to rehearse, train and gather their own information to drive their own operations."

Members of Recon Platoon observe an ERF unit conducting small unit tactics during a training session.



Brigade Psychologist keeps

Story and photo by
SpC. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD

The U.S. military has always placed a key importance on 'leaving no one behind.'

Most Soldiers understand that this means not leaving a physically wounded comrade on the battlefield.

However, in recent years the Army has also been placing a high priority on the mental health of Soldiers.

"I'm here to take care of the Commander's Soldiers," said Capt. Jessica Schultz, a clinical psychologist assigned to the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. "I'm always going to look out for the best interest of the Soldier, that's my profession, but ultimately it's about making sure these Soldiers can function and (do) what they have to do so (their) commanders can carry out their missions."

Schultz has been practicing psychology for more than three years and said she has always had an interest in psychology and helping people through their problems.

"It's a very rewarding job to be able to assist and guide people to get where they want to go and help them with a mental illness," said Schultz.

Schultz and psychologists across

the Army work at the brigade level to help Soldiers deal with common deployment stressors (such as being away from family) to deeper psychological issues which could have existed prior to entering military service and have come to light during their deployment.



Capt. Jessica Schultz, Brigade Psychologist, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division

The process for a Soldier to receive treatment for stress or other psychological problems, like clinical depression, begins with the Soldier. Any brigade Soldier who is feeling stressed or depressed can go to the troop medical center and speak with Schultz or another combat stress

professional at this facility.

When a Soldier steps forward and identifies themselves as someone who needs help, they undergo a detailed evaluation to determine whether their problem is what the Army has come to call "combat operational stress reaction", or a behavioral health problem that becomes worse with a deployment.

"Combat operational stress reaction is all the things that, if these guys were at home, we would not be seeing them (for). That means things like a Soldier not getting along with their unit or the stress of being away from their family," said Schultz.

Treatment for a Soldier showing signs of operational stress varies on a case-by-case basis and usually consists of stress control, basic things such as "blowing off steam" or keeping active and focusing on work.

For deeper issues, two options are available – medication, or therapy.

If the Soldier has a medication issue, they are referred to the

brigade psychologist, or the TMC's doctors and physicians' assistants.

With therapy, Schultz uses different types of techniques to assist Soldiers through their problems. For some Soldiers that means helping them to find a way to blow off steam; with others, treatment can

Helps Soldiers in the fight

become more complex, and often involves several sessions.

Still another resource for combat operational stress reactions are Chaplains.

Schultz said each case varies, but the average amount of time a Soldier is seen is around two months.

"Sometimes Soldiers come in and do two or three sessions and are perfect. They get something off their chest and have a sense of relief," said Schultz. "There are rare cases where I've been seeing some Soldiers since we've been here. Those cases may be monthly check in or something every few weeks. It all depends on the problem."

One way Schultz stays with her mission of ensuring Soldiers are well enough to complete their missions is by visiting separate forward operating bases in Diyala.

She travels twice a month. First to FOB Normandy and later in the month she visits FOB Caldwell and Combat Outpost Cobra.

"Basically, anyone who has a request and isn't located here on Warhorse - we go to them," said Schultz. "When we actually go out to a unit, we see so many more people than the ones who are going to raise their hands and come to Warhorse."

Schultz said traveling to the other FOBs allows for her to meet with the Soldiers while they are still with their units and completing missions.

"To get a guy from Cobra to Warhorse is at least a five-day process," said Schultz. "It goes against our push to keep guys in the fight."

When out at the other FOBs, Schultz added, Soldiers can come in to see her at night

after completing a mission, allowing her to consult with them before a problem becomes acute, and subsequently taking a Soldier away from their unit.

"In general with the Soldiers, more and more people are starting to recognize it is not a weakness to ask for help. It's a sign of strength and it's a sign of self recognition," said Schultz. "If you wait until it's a crisis to seek help because you are afraid of being seen as weak, you will have a crisis and may not be able to get back into the fight. We want people to speak up right away so we can get them help."

Schultz's work assists and guides Soldiers through the

stress of deployment, and helps commanders to complete the mission. With the 1-25 SBCT preparing to redeploy, Schultz says Soldiers and leaders need to begin thinking about easing into life on the home front.

"I have to say the same things the chain-of-command is saying about redeployment: 'stay focused on the mission, (and) don't get complacent.' When you have down time, begin mentally preparing for what life will be like when you go home," said Schultz. "The biggest piece of advice we give is to go slow, don't jump back into your family or friends, take it easy and make smart decisions."

**NEVER LEAVE
A FALLEN
COMRADE**

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Be willing to listen.

It is your responsibility to get help for a fellow Soldier

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TA-063-0107

Bulldogs Train Iraqi Police

Story and Photos provided by
3rd Battalion 21st Infantry

Soldiers with B Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment developed an Iraqi Police training program, located in an area nicknamed the "Breadbasket of Iraq."

Spanning nearly two months, the strategy for this training program was ultimately focused around how to help local Iraqi Police leadership build confidence in their abilities.

In the beginning stages of the program, B Company (the "Bulldogs") leaders were confident that the most important step to making the proposed training successful was by briefing the Iraqi officers and senior Non-Commissioned Officers first. Following this, with their 'buy-in' for each block of training, the IP leadership could influence their IP stations to have maximum participation.

The strategy worked. IP Participation, across the board, was excellent, and training

naturally fell into place.

Each battery platoon was assigned several key blocks of instruction. The syllabus contained classes on Tactical Questioning, Police Patrolling, Tactical Sight Exploitation, Weapons Safety, Information Operations, Radio Reporting Procedures, First Aid, Vehicle Search Procedures and Command Post Operations.

The task of teaching the classes alternated between 1st Platoon, 2nd Platoon and Headquarters Platoon. The platoon that had the class for the week would begin by preparing slide show in English, which was then translated into Arabic; this last step ultimately allowed for much greater understanding by the IPs attending the training. Additionally, unit trainers created handouts of the slides for attending IP leadership, adding another important element to facilitate more thorough understanding for all involved.

Each Monday at 10 a.m., attending IP leadership from the Hembis, Bezul and Little Barwana IP stations met at Combat Outpost Milledge for that particular week's block of instruction.

The class on Monday was tailored for IP leadership, and intended primarily to familiarize them with the various tasks that their respective policemen would be learning. This familiarization also served the purpose of hopefully catching their interest and convincing them that the training was important and necessary. Consistently, attending IP officers were supportive and willing to let the Bulldogs teach their IPs.

After the Monday course, the platoons would then go out to their IP stations and dedicate two patrols per week as Transition Team Operations. During those patrols, the platoons would teach the classes to the IPs and then take the skills in sector and conduct hands on training.

The Vehicle Search Procedures class made particular impact in the hands on training part of the course. This block of instruction gave attending IPs the skills needed to properly search vehicles, a skill that all too often directly impacts the security in the Breadbasket.

After all of the training was complete, an Iraqi Police Graduation Ceremony was conducted on COP Milledge. Staff Brigadier General Khudair, the Muqadadiyah Iraqi Police commander attended the ceremony and congratulated all of the Iraqi Police. Approximately 60 IPs attended the event and received awards.

Overall, there were over 250 IPs trained during the course of the two months of training.

Jim Murphy, TF 3-21 BN LEP, utilizes an interpreter to teach IP's about tactical sight exploitation



Mutually beneficial to both Coalition Forces and IP alike, several 3-21 Soldiers said that the training gave them a chance to excel in many different ways. It also gave the platoons a visual confirmation that they had contributed in a unique way to the security and betterment of Iraq.

The training didn't cost any money, just sweat and hard work.

Ultimately, the training developed a sense of pride and camaraderie between the Bulldogs and the Iraqi Police. Those friendships that developed during the training program will be remembered by the Bulldogs and the Iraqi Police of the Sinsil for many years to come.

Perhaps most importantly, the Iraqi Police were given the skills needed to secure their villages, and the confidence that they have what it takes to do so.



A U.S. Army Soldier teaches an Iraqi Policeman how to properly search a motorcycle while another IP pulls security



A U.S. Soldier maintains rear security for an Iraqi Police officer from the Bezul IP station as he conducts a vehicle search.

On the PROWL

WHAT IS WORSE; AN IRAQI SUMMER OR AN ARCTIC WINTER?



"Summer is worse. You have to stay outside with all your gear on and keep hydrating. Plus it's easier to warm up than cool down." **Spc. Alex Alcantara**, Guam.



"THE ALASKAN WINTER IS WORSE. THERE IS MORE RISK FOR EXPOSURE THERE," **Maj. Brian Ungerer**, NEWARK, DEL.



"An Alaskan winter, I don't like the cold and I like the heat," **Spc. Daniel Navarrette**, Tucson, Ariz.



"An Iraqi summer any day because it's Iraq. Because I'm over here and not with my family. I would rather be at negative 60 than over here at 140 and away from my family," **Staff Sgt. Jason Foy**, San Deigo, Calif.



"Iraqi summer because I prefer cold and no man should live in this heat," **Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Jordan**, Alexandria, N.H.



"Iraqi summer by far because it's just so hot," **Spc. Stephen Kavanagh**, Sharon, Iowa



"Iraqi summer is worse, because you can always put more layers on in the cold but you can't beat the heat, especially when they turn the A/C's off in the middle of the day to work on them," **Staff Sgt. Peter Klundt**, Fresno, Calif.



"Winter, we have to run in minus 20 degree weather with icicles hanging off your face." **Spc. Charles Ware**, Tanzwell, Tenn.

Operation Proper Exit helps injured veterans find closure in Diyala

Story by Sgt. Jeremy Pitcher
145th MPAD

Photos by Col. Burt Thompson
1-25 SBCT Commander

The Troops First Foundation, sponsored by the United Service Organizations, recently stopped at in Diyala province with six Soldiers who had sustained injuries while previously deployed to Iraq.

Called Operation Proper Exit, the program was developed to allow Soldiers who suffered extreme combat injuries to return to where they previously served, largely in order to gain a perspective of what their sacrifices contributed to the stability and security of Iraq.

The group began their visit to Diyala province on June 25, attending a luncheon, hosted for them by a local prominent Sheik. Also in attendance was Diyala governor Abdel-Nasir al-Muntasirbillah, former Governor Ra'ad, as well as several top officials from Multi-National Force - Iraq.

During the visit, Sheik Mazan provided a summary of the many improvements in Diyala and how appreciative he was of their many sacrifices.

During the gathering the Soldiers had the opportunity to tell their story and how their injuries were sustained.

After the traditional Iraqi meal and gift exchange, they traveled to Forward Operating Base Warhorse, where a ceremony was held to commemorate the sacrifices of

Soldiers wounded and killed in action supporting combat operations in Diyala, Iraq.

Col. Burt Thompson, the current Coalition Force commander in Diyala, provided the Warriors with a brief overview of progress in Diyala, highlighting many of the security gains, the many essential service projects, and improvements in the rule of law.

Thompson told the group that their contributions directly contributed to the stability we see today in Iraq, "on behalf of the 5,600 Soldiers of the Arctic Wolves, I thank you for your service, your commitment, but most importantly for your many sacrifices - you are an inspiration to us all".

Thompson presented each Warrior with a Certificate and Combat Coin of Excellence.

The visit was day four of a five day tour around the country to the regions where each of the Soldiers was injured.

"It is so important that these Soldiers see the progress that was made in Iraq," said Col. David Southerland, one of the six Soldiers receiving the tour.

"To be able to come back to Iraq and walk out on my own, it means a lot. I put a lot of hard work into this country and I don't even remember leaving last time because I was unconscious. It's finally going to be a closure," said Staff Sgt. Bradley Gruetzner, an injured Soldier on the tour.

Soldiers with Operation Proper Exit pose in front of a memorial wall erected on Forward Operating Base Warhorse during a tour of Diyala, Iraq. The 'operation' allows Soldiers who received extreme injuries while in combat to return to where they had been previously deployed to gain a perspective of how their sacrifices contributed to the future success of Iraq.



5-1 CAV, Iraqi Army work together

Story and Photos provided by
Sgt. Dan Click
5th Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry

Clearing known insurgent strongholds and talking to the villagers of Diyala Province is nothing new to the troopers of 5th Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, however, there was one added facet to their duties during the month of May -- humanitarian aid (HA).

The unit's humanitarian aid mission came during the final phase of their month long combined operation "Glad Tidings of Benevolence II." GTOB II focused on rooting out insurgents from their strongholds, reducing caches, and reinforcing confidence from local residents that Iraqi Security Forces can continue to provide a stable and secure Iraq.

Each of the three troops participating in the HA drop, had a humanitarian aid package that consisted of 300 bags of rice, 300 bags of flour, 300 bags of sugar, 150 boxes of cooking oil, and 150 boxes of bottled water. The total aid package for each troop was worth approximately \$ 50,000 and weighed more than 100,000 pounds.

Before distributing the HA items to the villagers, the Troopers first had to unload all of the items into large metal containers (CONEXs). Each one of the bags of rice, flour, and sugar weighed approximately 110 pounds.

It was a total troop effort,



A leader with the Iraqi Army inspects local men's ration cards to verify their collection of the humanitarian aid during a drop conducted by the Iraqi Army and units of the 5th Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division

said Cpl. Justin Crumrine.

"Unloading the aid in some ways was nice," said the 3rd Platoon, A Troop member. "Everyone worked together as a team to get it done."

Once the aid was sorted, it was time to distribute the aid throughout the area. Different 5-1 CAV platoons worked with their Iraqi Security Forces counterparts throughout the Blackhawk Area of Operations.

B Troop's area, which covered many of the villages in the northern part of the Blackhawk Area of Operations, worked not only with Iraqi Army, but also with the Peshmerga, a security force in the Kurdish areas.

3rd Platoon, B Troop Soldiers worked with both security forces while distributing the HA throughout the Blackhorse area. Many of the 15 villages 3rd Platoon distributed HA to were rural villages that had Arabs

and Kurds. 3rd Platoon worked with Iraqi Security forces and local muqtars in determining who needed the HA, and how it would be distributed. Some of the villages that received aid included, Baba Mahmoud, 'Ali Dawud, and Mahmud 'Abbas.

While the Arab/Kurd relationship can be a tenuous one at times, during the HA drop, everyone worked together for the common good of the people, said Sgt. First Class Dennis Musselman.

"The two worked well together," said Musselman, 3rd Platoon, B Troop's first sergeant. "They were standing arm and arm together and we had no issues at all."

While A and B troops distributed aid in many of the rural areas of the Blackhawk Area of Operations, C Troop tackled many of the bigger areas of the area.

Some of the cities that C

er for Humanitarian Assistance

Troop Soldiers delivered HA to included Qara Tapa and As Sadiyah; in several cases, these were areas that were very recently once insurgent strongholds. Regardless of this unfortunate fact, after the clearing operations were complete, the villagers were ready to receive the much needed and appreciated aid.

Throughout the entire process of the distributing of the aid, the ISF were in the lead, while the Troopers took a support role. The Soldiers provided security while the ISF distributed the aid, and made sure every family got one bag each of rice, flour,

sugar. Additionally, every family got bottles of cooking oil and bottles of water.

Although there are still many challenges left in the area, the great deal of assistance the ISF gave during the humanitarian aid drop was a promising sign, said Cpl. Doug Jury.

"It went smooth, and overall it wasn't stressful," said the gunner from 1st Platoon, A Troop. "By their performance, I think they did a good job and it is one step closer to us getting out of here."

For many of the Soldiers in the Squadron, it was an opportunity to give back to an area that has seen much turmoil.

Much of Diyala Province was once overrun with Al-Qa'ida in Iraq insurgents, and still faces many of the same problems that most Iraqis face -- lack of food, water, and jobs. The ability to go into a village and provide them with the basics, while supporting the ISF was a good way to finish GTOB II.

"The villagers were so used to us coming in and talking to them about the problems of the villages and the insurgents," said Cpl. Jesse Stern of 1st Platoon, A Troop. "...to help them out and give them stuff, reinforces that we are here to help and get them back on their feet."

Iraqi citizens and members of the Iraqi Army move bags of rice during a humanitarian aid drop conducted by Iraqi Security Forces and Soldiers of the 5th Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.



2-8 FA works with IA Pa joint information sh

Story and photo by
Spc. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD

Soldiers with the 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division keep information flowing, and at the same time build relations with their Iraqi counterparts at a new joint operations center in Diyala.

Located at Forward Operating Base Lion, Soldiers with 2-8 FA and their counterparts, the Iraqi Army's 18th Brigade, 5th Division operate the Combined Operations and Intelligence Cell, the latest joint concept developed by both Iraqi and U.S. forces. The new center is primarily devoted to keeping lines of communication open between the two units, as they



Staff Sgt. Luceldic Harrison, non-commissioned officer-in-charge (intelligence cell), and an Iraqi Army soldier point to an Iraqi Army convoy on a map in the Combined Operation and Intelligence Cell office.

continue to work together towards a common purpose.

Capt. Lucas Sandidge, Officer-in-charge of the COIC said the cell's mission is to rapidly report significant

activities, track all combined Iraqi Army and Coalition Forces movements and track IA units operating without a Coalition partner; within the 2-8's area of operations.

The method the COIC uses is simple. Soldiers operate a tactical operations center, much like a battalion headquarters, and using interpreters they feed all information they receive to an almost identical IA TOC in the next room.

"Our mission here is a

Two Iraqi Army soldiers rest between receiving radio transmissions, tracking IA convoys and patrols



Partner to establish clearing center in Diyala

partnership with the IA to track patrol and missions between the Iraq Army and U.S. Army,” said Staff Sgt. Luceldic Harrison, non-commissioned officer-in-charge, intelligence cell, “We receive the patrol tracker from our units then we sit down with the IA and discuss what they are tracking and ensure we are tracking the same missions.”

The cell was set up around June 30 and was created in part by the Security Agreement.

“As time goes by the Government of Iraq asserts itself, and when they do the Iraqi Army will as well,” said Sandidge. “It’s those hard dates that bring about change and growth in the GOI and IA. One of the things the COIC does is to ensure that as the growth happens, things are getting done the right way, and people are communicating.”

One of the challenges the COIC came across when first setting up was the lack of communication between themselves and the IA.

“We have to make sure we are always talking to them and making sure they are comfortable enough to talk to us,” said Harrison.

The cell has found many ways to build relations; sometimes it is as simple as sitting down and talking with their IA partners.

“It’s like making friends. For someone to fully trust



Pfc. Erik Thomas-Zewski takes a report from a Coalition unit while monitoring radio communications in the 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment’s area of operations in Diyala province.

you and tell you everything... you need to sit down with them and talk, even if it’s about simple things like cars or how their families are doing.” Harrison said.

The Soldiers of the COIC keep the lines of communication open between the 18th Brigade and 2-8 FA, ensuring the Iraqi – U.S. partnership continues to grow.

Iraqi Fusion Cell brings U.S., Iraqi intelligence gathering to new heights

Story and photo by
Sgt. Benjamin Navratil
184th Military Intelligence Co.

One small part of the greater effort to transition the security of Diyala Province out of the hands of Coalition Forces and into those of the Iraqi Security Forces is located on Forward Operating Base Gabe, a small part of FOB Lion, located just outside of the provincial capital city of Baqubah.

A team of four intelligence analysts from the 184th Military Intelligence Company, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, remain in the Diyala Operations Center working in what has been dubbed the Iraqi Fusion Cell. This small group of soldiers works closely with Iraqi intelligence officers, assisting in the development of the Iraqi Security Forces' intelligence operations, and 'fusing' their intelligence capabilities with ours.

The teams from the 184th MI Company that are sent to the IFC are comprised of up to four soldiers: an Officer-in-Charge, a Non-Commissioned Officer-in-Charge, and two enlisted analysts.

Each team spends a period of 25 days at the cell, "facilitating transparent targeting and supporting the warrant process," said 2nd Lt. Robin Tullercash, the OIC for the initial IFC team, who spent the last three weeks in June there. "This is a step in the right direction for the Iraqis to stand on their own two feet."

Tullercash and her team worked, through a pair of

interpreters, with three Iraqi Intelligence officers; one of whom, General Thafir, is the director of intelligence for Diyala province, and oversees all the intelligence operations conducted by the Iraqi Security Forces in the province. Their primary responsibility is to convert intelligence from various sources into evidence that can be used by the Iraqi Security Forces to seek and obtain warrants from the Iraqi judicial system, investigate targeted individuals, and prosecute suspected insurgents on their own. Additionally, the team sanitizes intelligence documents and products for use by the Iraqi officers in their own intelligence operations.

U.S. military intelligence often uses a whole host of different sources of intelligence when targeting individuals and building up cases against them, whereas the Iraqi court system relies mostly on witness testimony and sworn statements. After working at the IFC, many of the Iraqis involved have become very interested in the potential benefits adopting some of the techniques used by U.S. forces, especially biometric evidence (fingerprints, for example), and their use in the intelligence gathering process.

One major challenge that the IFC faces is taking raw intelligence data and translating it into pertinent, usable, and up-to-date evidence that can be shared with Iraqi counterparts, without violating U.S. security protocols forbidding the divulgement of classified

information. To that end, the team works closely with Foreign Disclosure Officers located within the Brigade intelligence section on FOB Warhorse. These trained experts in the nuances of information security de-classify documents by removing or re-wording parts that contain sensitive information, in order to release the document to the Iraqi officers.

For many of these analysts – many of whom have spent most of their tour in the Brigade's Analysis Control Element and often rarely leave FOB Warhorse – this is the first time they have been put in a situation where they work so intimately with Iraqis and the two interpreters assigned with them.

The initial obstacle the teams needed to overcome was the inherent barrier between them, created by their disparate personal and professional backgrounds. As time passed, and the two units conducted intelligence operations together, passing information between themselves as freely as security protocols allow; the teams were able to build a healthy professional relationship. By the end of June, the Iraqis were very receptive to the assistance and direction provided by the IFC team.

The current team at the IFC is forging the way ahead for the Iraqi Security Forces to take positive control over the intelligence mission, continuing to support the targeting of threats to security, and are preparing for the time to come when US forces have left Diyala province.

Brigade Troops Battalion says “Thanks!”

Story by
1st Lt. Shane West
Brigade Troops Battalion

The Brigade Troops Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, would like to send a special “thank you” to Joseph M. Zimmer, Inc. a construction company based out of Baltimore, Md. The Vice President Ms. Rhonda Hughes and the employees of Joseph M. Zimmer, Inc. have raised donations for three years to send care packages to deployed units.

Ms. Hughes, aunt of the BTB’s own 184th Military Intelligence Company Commander, Capt. Dervan Taafe-McMenamy, raised funds this year and the owner, Mr. Joseph Zimmer, matched the donations. Their goal was to purchase a t-shirt, hooded sweatshirt and hat for every Soldier in the BTB.

The BTB, which



Front Row: Marya Pazourek, Sandra Greenwell, Charlotte Raynor **Second Row:** Stacy Wallace, Michelle Merritt, Bryan Clark, “Aunt” Rhonda Hughes, Michelle Ambuehl

is composed of five companies and one troop, has approximately 625 Soldiers. Each Soldier was given a bag that consisted of the items mentioned above, along with a bag of Harry and David nut mix. Many Soldiers within the battalion have written personal letters of thanks and sent pictures displaying the items to the

members Zimmer, Inc. The unconditional devotion in which Ms. Hughes, Mr. Zimmer and the many other employees who were involved are what made these packages that much more special. We at the Brigade Troops Battalion appreciate your efforts and continued patriotism. Thank you for standing behind us and we salute you!

Delta Troop, 5th Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry, attached to BTB, wears their new t-shirts



Training to Save Lives

Story and Photos provided by
1st Lt. Walter Kaer
1st Battalion 24th Infantry

Medics are a vital piece of the U.S. Army's ability to complete its mission. It is often no different for the Iraqi Army, which is why the medical Platoon of 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1/25th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, in partnership with the 19/5 Military Transition Team, or MiTT, recently provided training to the medics of the 19th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division.

"Our main goal with these events is to provide these medics with the knowledge they need to save lives," says Staff Sgt. Patrick Mackey, the medic for the 19/5 MiTT. "Beyond the actual training, we are coaching the (Iraqi Army) brigade's medical leadership in planning and implementing brigade-level training."

Before the training occurred, Capt. Farhan Nasr Allah Sarhan, the 19th IA Brigade Surgeon, requested the training subjects. After requesting the training, the next step was to push the order to the battalions to get their medics in the right place, at the right time, and in the right uniform.

"Capt. Farhan...requested the subjects to teach. From there I stay linked-in with him and his staff to ensure the battalions get the tasking to be here at Khamees with their aid bags and combat load," Mackey said.

"Teaching through the language barrier is difficult, so we try to minimize the 'death-by-powerpoint' time and lean



A medic with the 19th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division splints a simulated open leg fracture on Staff Sgt. Nicholas Simmons.

more on 'hands-on' approach. The evaluation time consists of a trauma lane with casualty players, and wound mock-ups. They (IA soldiers) are not only evaluated on patient treatment, but also how well they apply principles of Trauma Combat Casualty Care (TC3)," Mackey continued.

Sgt. First Class Michael Walker, TF 1-24 IN's Medical Platoon Sergeant, currently on his second tour in Iraq, has trained IA medics before and knows how far these medics have come.

"We know we cannot pull all of the medics out of the fight, so we are going with a 'train the trainer' approach, which builds on itself every time we meet, and then we challenge them to take the information to their units and share with their soldiers," said Walker, "so we are not only training these medics, but also encouraging them to 'grow' their NCO corps as well."

Some of these IA medics

go for formal schooling in Taji. The rest learn through on-the-job training. No matter how these medics became medics, they are receiving important sustainment training.

"We all know that our medical skills are perishable, so it is so important to keep our skills sharp," Walker said.

All of the trainers agree that although the medics of 19th Brigade are not, on a whole, very skilled, they are motivated and dedicated to their job.

"It is good to see that the Iraqi medics are progressing," said Walker.

The Iraqi medics are eager to learn and the training is well received, according to Lt. Hatem Abdul Karim, the 19th Brigade Medical Operations Officer. "We are very thankful for the coalition forces for providing this training. It is our duty to continue this training and teach our other medics," said Hatem.

Chaplain's Corner

Seeing Potential

Recently, I was thinking about the skill of seeing and nurturing *potential* in people. I believe that some of the best leaders we see in life didn't start out as best leaders. In fact, some of the best leaders in life went for years being identified as losers or low performers. I believe people must reach that epiphanous moment when they realize that *their past is not their potential*. Our nation has a few in the history books.

1. George Washington lost most of the battles he fought in the War for Independence, yet he won the war. Many questioned his abilities as he continually lost battle after battle. He was known as the retreating general among some because he would retreat and hide so much.
2. Abraham Lincoln was recognized as a political loser because he lost seven or eight elections in a row before he was elected to be the President.
3. General US Grant quit the Army after 17 years of service as a despondent and unsuccessful alcoholic and went on to fail in two businesses before he came back on active duty in a time of war. (And they almost didn't let him do that!)
4. General Dwight D. Eisenhower was thought by peers to have "very limited potential" because his strengths were "not in war fighting" and he had a very uncharismatic leadership style. Yet he became the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and President of the United States.
5. Audie Murphy was not allowed in the Marine Corps or the US Army Airborne because they said he was "too little and weak," and could not perform to standards. Yet, he became the most decorated war hero of WWII.

I often wonder how many "low performers" like these are in our Brigade.



Chaplain (Maj.) Roderick Mills

FALLEN WOLVES

SPC Heath Pickard, C Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 18 Sept 1987 - 16 Oct 2008

PFC Cody Eggleston, C Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 17 Sept 1987 - 24 Oct 2008

CPL Michael Mayne, A Company, 5th Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 9 Oct 1987 - 23 Feb 2009

CPL Micheal Alleman, A Company, 5th Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 19 Jan 1978 - 23 Feb 2009

CPL Zachary Nordmeyer, A Company, 5th Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 5 Aug 1987 - 23 Feb 2009

SPC Israel Candelaria Mejias, A Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 26 Feb 1981 - 5 April 2009

SPC Michael Edward Yates Jr., HHC, 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 5 Sept 1989 - 11 May 2009

SSG Christian Erique Bueno-Galdos, HHC, 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 16 Aug 1983 - 11 May 2009

Military Working Dog, Jok, Brigade Troops Battalion, 14 Nov 2008

A wolf is shown in profile, howling with its mouth open and head tilted back. The background is a light, hazy blue.

The Arctic Warrior March

We conquer the mountains and the valleys!

We train in the winter's bitter cold!

Alaska Soldiers! Arctic Warriors!

Sentries of the North!

So pick up your weapons and your snowshoes!

We're ready to fight and to defend!

The finest Soldiers! Arctic Warriors! From the last Frontier!

The Wolf Creed

Strike fear in the enemy's hearts and minds;
I am a lethal and skilled warfighter with unmatched intestinal fortitude.

Being a disciplined, professional Soldier, I live the Army Values.

Committed to my fellow Soldiers, unit and country, I am ready to answer my nation's call -- NOW!

Tough, both physically and mentally, and instilled with warrior spirit, I can accomplish my mission. Anytime. Anywhere.

Arctic Wolves!

Arctic Tough!