

# Lightning Strikes

Volume 1, Issue 2

February 2009



Blackjack Brigade Partners with ISF  
Send in the Robots!

10th CAB Medic Helps Out





# African American Civil War Heroes Paved Way for Modern Army



"Storming Fort Wagner," A portrait commemorating the bravery and sacrifices of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment during their assault on Fort Wagner at Morris Island, Charleston, S.C., July 18, 1863, now hangs at the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment Headquarters.

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

Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letter, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship." Those were the words of Frederick Douglass, former slave and Abolitionist, speaking on the, then controversial, topic of African American enlistment into the U.S. military. Were Douglass alive to see today's U.S. military, he would certainly smile a joyous and patriotic smile.

The progress of African Americans in American society can be seen as a direct reflection of how we, as a people, have progressed. Here but not at home, African Americans in early America were denied the rights granted to all citizens as their birthrights. Among these rights was the right to take up arms for their country.

Upon the outbreak of the Civil War at Fort Sumter, many freed African American men answered the call of the nation. Unfortunately, a 1792 Federal law barred African American from enlisting in the Army. It wasn't until 1682 that Congress freed all slaves from their confederate masters. This was followed by President Abraham Lincoln formally issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, executive orders which freed remaining slaves from the confederate south.

African American Soldiers fought on both sides of the Civil War, but this can be considered a rare instance in that African American Soldiers on both sides won. These Soldiers had much to prove and they did so with valor and sacrifice beyond what many Soldiers could hope to never be forced to face.

"Don't worry when you are not recognized, but strive to be worthy of recognition," President Lincoln once said.

Often provided with smaller rations, poor medical care and substantially smaller wages, African American Soldiers of the American Civil War fought this second war, the first being the Revolutionary War, with a small, yet steady, progression toward equality.

"Many African American Soldiers were not given the chance to excel," said Sgt. 1st Class Miguel A. Ramirez, equal opportunity advisor, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 25th Infantry Division, who has met many African American military pioneers during his career as an EO representative. "A lot of the time they were set up for failure."

History has recognized the trials and triumphs of these brave Soldiers who set the standard for African American Soldiers for generations to come. Casting aside doubts on the rights of African American Soldiers to serve, these Soldiers took control of their own destiny, not only fighting for to preserve the union, but the freedom of the unjustly enslaved men and women of the nation.

"These men were just as capable and patriotic as any other man," said Ramirez. "They were judged solely on the color of their skin and not on the merit of their character. It's easy to look in our military history and find many, many African American Soldiers, like the Tuskegee Airmen or Dorie Miller, who were heroes."

Among the immense list of African American heroes were the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment during the U.S. Civil War.

During the Union's second assault on Fort Wagner in 1863, the 54th MVIR, one of the nation's first African American units, launched a brave, yet unsuccessful attack on the heavily fortified confederate stronghold. Though the regiment failed to take the fort, the Soldiers of the 54th MSVIR proved their unshakable determination and dedication to duty to many of their critics. When the Civil War finally came to an end, 16 African American Soldiers had been awarded the Medal of Honor.

"Everyone should be given a chance," said Ramirez. "African American men and women of the United States military have set the example, not just for African American Soldiers, but all Soldiers."

From the first regiment of African American freedmen who fought alongside General George Washington during the American Revolutionary War, to heroes like Medal of Honor recipient Pvt. George Watson, of the Army's 29th Quartermaster Regiment, who gave his life saving the lives of many drowning shipmates during the Japanese attack on Porloch Harbor, New Guinea, African American Soldiers in our armed forces continue to uphold the highest of military traditions.

"And then there will be some black men who can remember that with silent tongue and clenched teeth and steady eye and well-poised bayonet they have helped mankind on to this great consummation," President Abraham Lincoln said, honoring the contribution of African American Soldiers and Sailors during the Civil War.



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Cover Photo by Spc. Jazz Burney 3rd IBCT, 25 ID Public Affiars

Soldiers with the 4th Iraqi Division and 3rd Sqdn. 4th Cav. Regt, 25th Inf. Div., take a knee after exiting an Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter at FOB Paliwoda near Balad as they trained on loading and exiting helicopter procedures for a combined operation that cleared and secured the Bichigan area near Balad, Feb 14.



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**T**o all the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Civilians of TASK FORCE LIGHTNING, thank you for all you do.

This month I'd like to start off by welcoming the newest addition to Task Force Lightning, the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Hood, Texas. The 2nd HBCT increases Task Force Lightning to a four-brigade set, and the professionalism, experience and dedication that they bring to the fight will pay dividends as we continue with our mission. Welcome to MND-N and Task Force Lightning!

We are now a couple months into our tour in northern Iraq, and even though we have already achieved some major accomplishments, there remain many more that we will recognize. Every day we are taking the fight to the enemy, only now we are doing so in direct coordination and in conjunction with our Iraqi brothers in arms. The enemy remains a determined and deadly foe, one we must never take for granted; the snake may be dying, but it is not dead.

With that being said, I'd like to talk about standards and discipline, as well as the need to remain focused and not slip into complacency. It is easy to get comfortable in our daily routines, whether that be patrolling the towns and villages of this country, driving the roads on route clearance missions, conducting aerial reconnaissance missions, or coming to work here at division headquarters. As we progress in our mission we must remain ever vigilant and mission focused.

Complacency is another enemy that we will face, but it is an enemy that we bring about ourselves, and it is an enemy just as deadly as any

that we will face on the field of battle. Unlike the human enemies that we face outside the wire, we can combat complacency from within; it is an enemy that we can control.

I challenge leaders at all levels, from the young team leader to the most seasoned brigade commander, to never allow standards to waiver. We are a professional organization, executing a very challenging mission, and we are successful because of the standards we adhere to and the leaders who enforce them.

The discipline that has been instilled in each and every one of you is what ensures that we never lower our standards. It is discipline, coupled with the standards which will see us through the fight and enable us to return to our loved ones.

As we all seek to maintain standards and discipline, we need to ensure that we continue to train and evolve as a fighting force. The environment is continually changing, and as it does we must remain flexible and adaptive. This will keep us relevant to the fight and allow us to better assist our Iraqi counterparts, ensuring that they will be effective as we transition.

A large part of our success, on top of defeating the enemy and rebuilding the country of Iraq, will be instilling the same standards and discipline in the Iraqi Army as we have in ours. If we are successful in this, then we will leave behind a professional, dedicated fighting force in the Iraqi Army, one that is able to secure the country and citizens of Iraq without the need of outside assistance.

The Soldiers and officers of the Iraqi Army watch and learn from us, and if they see that we can remain dedicated and focused during our time here then I have no doubt that they will believe they can do the same.

In the end it is our dedication to our profession which will allow both us and our Iraqi counterparts to enjoy success. Always remain ready and focused; Stay alert, stay alive!

I look forward to progressing in this fight and the many more accomplishments that I know we will achieve.

**TROPIC LIGHTNING!**

Robert L. Caslen Jr.  
Major General, USA  
Commanding





First allow me to welcome Task Force Greywolf and Task Force Blackjack to Task Force Lightning and Multi - National Division - North Area of Responsibility. I thank all of you for your involvement in setting the conditions directly or indirectly which allowed the people of Iraq to participate in the democratic process of their Provincial Elections.

Be proud that one day there will be books written about the direct impact that you and your unit had in establishing democracy through partnership with the Iraqi Security Forces; what monumental accomplishments.

This has allowed the Government of Iraq and the ISF to gain confidence in their ability to lead and provide security for their county. More importantly, the ISF has been exposed to a standards-based organization. Whether you know this or not, the ISF watches you and sees how you conduct daily business, as they also want to be just like you. Continue to be the constant professional Soldier, sailor, airman, Marine or coastguardsmen that you are. Leaders, both junior and senior, have the trust, faith and confidence in your knowledge, skills and abilities on accomplishing any mission set before you. You are a professional.

As I travel throughout MND-N, ISF leaders often comment on the professionalism of our Armed Forces and how we put trust and responsibility on our junior leaders. This has been dubbed as the “strategic Sergeant.” Many of you have heard me state that no one person can win this war, however, one person can set it back strategically by doing something stupid. The hard work that we have collectively contributed throughout the years can go out the window faster than you think. More importantly the trust and confidence that your leaders and ISF partners had in you is no longer valid. Don’t be “that guy” or “gal.”

It is imperative that we maintain our vigilance during this transitional period as we conduct daily operations by, with, and through our Iraqi partners to continue the development of their district, provincial and security force structure. Do not allow the enemy forces to drive a wedge between the Coalition and Iraqi Forces, which is the key to success. Know and understand the Rules of Engagement, rules of the road and continue to treat the Iraqi people with dignity and respect.

We, as Soldiers, can do a lot with a gun, having said that, there are other things we cannot do. Forging new relationships with ISF or the local populace can assist in networking together. The Iraqi people also want a secure and safe environment for their families, knowing and understanding the Iraqi culture and allowing them to know and understand ours bridges a gap of understanding. Continue to build relationships and assist the Iraqi people with a safe and secure environment.

Thanks for what you do every day for Task Force Lightning, we are successful because of professionals like you. Stay Safe!

TROPIC LIGHTNING!

Frank M. Leota

MND-N Command Sergeant Major

Command Sgt. Maj. Update



# STAY SAFE

# WHILE DEPLOYED

## Safety Tips

### \* Be Safety Conscious

-Practice safety when working on any circuit and slow down!

### \*Shut the Power off

-ALWAYS shut the power off to a circuit of a device that you will be working on

### \*Test the Circuit

-Never assume that the circuit is off, check with a tester

### \*Ladders

-Never use an aluminum or metal ladder on any electrical project

### \*Wet Locations

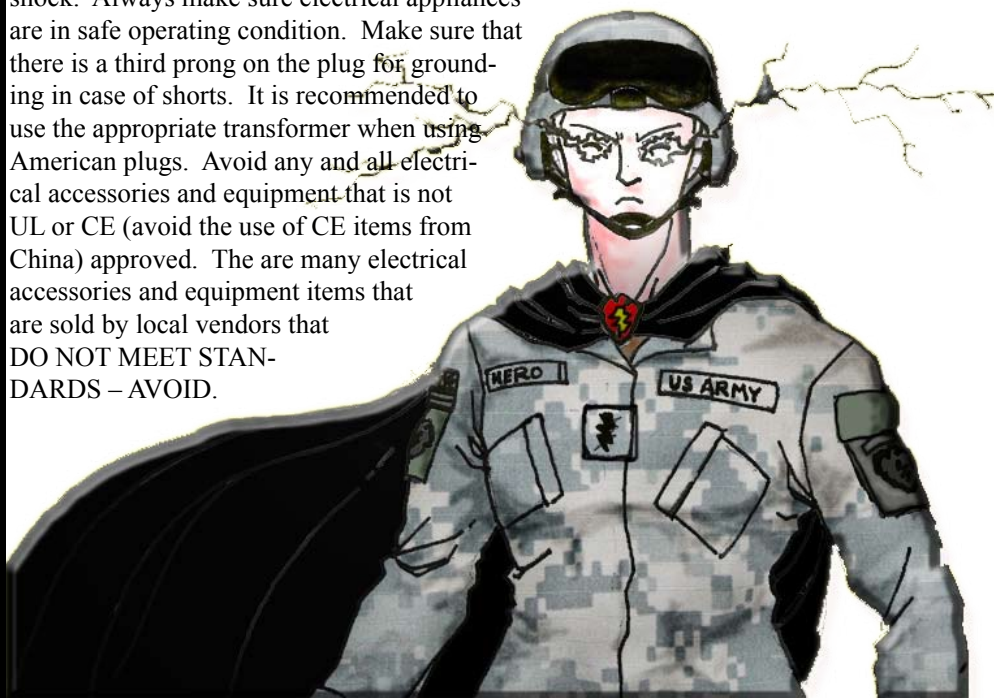
-Avoid wet areas when doing anything electrical

ALWAYS use caution when working near electricity or noticing electrical problems/risks

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) estimate that there are approximately 350 electrical related fatalities a year. In addition, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that there are 2,726 nonfatal electrical shocks that resulted in days away from work. One safety professional stated that there are probably 30,000 nonfatal electrical accidents a year, killed by 100 volts AC, many unreported. He further states that for every 300,000 at-risk events there are about 300 recorded injuries, 30 long term injuries, and one fatality. Strange as it may seem, most fatal electrical shocks happen to people who should know better. Recently on COB Speicher there was one accident that was the result of an electrical shock. This happened in conjunction with installing a television cable.

It's not the voltage that kills, but rather the current. People have been killed by 100 volts AC in the home and as little as 42 volts DC. The real measure of a shock's intensity lies in the amount of current (in milliamperes) forced through the body. Any electrical device used on a house wiring circuit can, under certain conditions, transmit a fatal amount of current. The following table illustrates that the amount of electricity to the effects on people: Electricity travels easily through the human body. The body is 70% water and is an excellent conductor of electricity. So, when you touch an energized bare electrical wire or a faulty appliance, the electricity will use your body as the shortest path to the ground. If you are grounded, the electricity will instantly pass through you to the ground, causing a harmful – and sometimes fatal – shock. It doesn't take much. You can be killed by the tiny amount of electricity used by one 7.5 watt holiday light if it passes through your chest. If the shock doesn't kill you, it can still badly hurt you by causing serious falls, burns, cuts, or internal bleeding. A shock from a 100 watt – bulb or a 1000 watt hair dryer will probably be fatal.

Effective grounding, one of the most important and least understood aspects of an electrical power system, is often overlooked during installation. Unfortunately this oversight has lead to equipment failures, higher operating costs, electrical noise, fire, personal injuries, and even death. On the other hand, a properly designed and well maintained wiring and grounding system will help ensure optimum equipment operations and personnel safety. Prevention is the best solution for electrical shock. Always make sure electrical appliances are in safe operating condition. Make sure that there is a third prong on the plug for grounding in case of shorts. It is recommended to use the appropriate transformer when using American plugs. Avoid any and all electrical accessories and equipment that is not UL or CE (avoid the use of CE items from China) approved. There are many electrical accessories and equipment items that are sold by local vendors that DO NOT MEET STANDARDS – AVOID.







# Send in the Robots!

By Pfc. Adam C. Blazak  
11th Public Affairs Detachment

Vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, improvised explosive devices and suicide vest explosive devices are all part of the enemy's arsenal of weapons as they attempt to use them to disrupt and destroy the significant security gains made in Mosul by the Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces. Defeating these inhumane and uncivilized weapons is not an easy task, but both the Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces are making significant strides in doing just that.

Coming across an IED isn't a rarity in the Iraqi city of Mosul. Just ask any Soldier from the 59th Mobility Augmentation Company, 84th Engineer Battalion, 18th Engineer Brigade, and he or she will tell you the dangers of an IED contact.

Simply put, "It's intense every time," said Loveland, Colo. Native, Staff Sgt. Jeron Pilger, training cadre, 59th Mobility Augmentation Co., 84th Engineer Bn., 18th Engineer Bde. Although specialty trained Soldiers can go and examine a suspected IED, it is always preferred that technology in the form of a robot, go first.

The engineering company currently uses two robotic technologies to visually interrogate suspected vehicle-borne and roadside IEDs. In essence, they use the robot before sending out a Soldier, Pilger said.

With this lifesaving technology, the engineer company realized the importance of sharing the knowledge, so they teamed up with their Iraqi counterparts for an afternoon of robotics training.

Pilger was part of the team of engineers who helped implement the robotics training program for an engineer regiment in the 2nd Iraqi Army Division.

Conducted at Combat Outpost Al Kindi, the training focused on improving the Soldier's agility and basic care and maintenance of the robots, Pilger said.

The training was multifaceted, with an intense overview of maintenance and general care of the robots at the start, which led to a hands-on portion of the technology.

"We made it as realistic as possible," said Brooklyn, N.Y. native Sgt. Marvin Blaise, lead instructor of the training, 59th Mobility Augmentation Co., 84th Engineer Bn., 18th Engineer Bde.

During the practical training exercises, IA Soldiers maneuvered the robots throughout a makeshift training explosive course in order to interrogate suspected IEDs from a safe distance.

One of the Soldiers participating in the training, Pvt. Salem



Brooklyn, N.Y. native, Sgt. Marvin Blaise, lead training instructor, 59th Mobility Augmentation Company, 84th Engineer Battalion, 18th Engineer Brigade, shows his Iraqi Army counterparts the components of a Talon robot, which is used to interrogate improvised explosive devices, during a robotics training program conducted at Combat Outpost Al Kindi, Mosul, Iraq, Dec. 30. The robotics training gave IA engineers the opportunity to improve their agility and maintenance of robotic technology. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Adam C. Blazak, 11th Public Affairs Detachment)

Hamo, Eng. Regt 2nd IA Div. said that in the past "Soldiers would pick up the IEDs by hand, but using the robots makes the job safer."

"We did the training to make them better," Blaise said. "This was just one step closer to making that happen."

# 'Sappers' Settle Into...Counterinsurgency Mission



Capt. Reynaldo Rivera, commander of Co. A, 3rd Bde. Special Troops Bn., 25th Inf. Div. spends time with school children during a school assessment in Sammara, a suburb of Tikrit, in Salah ad-Din Province

The New Year has arrived and the Soldiers of Company A, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 25th Infantry Division are finally settled into their environment. Even though the company's primary duty in previous Iraq rotations was route clearance, the company has successfully made the transition to counterinsurgency operations.

The Engineer Corps is one of the most adaptable branches in the U.S. Army, so to have mission change was not a huge concern for the Sappers. Co. A has conducted multiple engagements with local leadership by visiting city council meetings and listening to any issues that might arise.

"I knew things had changed for the

better when I attended a city council meeting and the members were debating where to install water pumps for irrigation," said Capt. Reynaldo Rivera, commander of Co. A, 3rd Bde. Special Troops Bn., 25th Inf. Div. "Security concerns were not mentioned once; that was a good day," he continued.

When the local Iraqi leadership has issues they can't immediately solve, the Sappers help them find a solution.

The Iraqi Security Forces that the engineers meet and work with on this Iraq rotation are remarkably more capable than those encountered on the last one. Both the Iraqi Police and Army have demonstrated that they are capable of operating on their own and can effectively protect their own people with little to no help

from the coalition. They are motivated and ready to take on the challenges that many of the Sappers have faced before.

In addition to the non-stop missions with the Iraqi Security Forces and meeting with local leaders to solve problems, Co. A has made sure to allow for some down time for its hard-working Soldiers during the holiday season. Sapper Soldiers were able to celebrate the holidays with a large feast and even a tree lighting ceremony. They received countless presents and holiday greetings cards, which let the Soldiers know that they are fully appreciated for their efforts and are missed at home. The mission is not yet complete, so the men of Co. A "Sappers" are ready to take on any challenge that is in front of them.





Staff Sgt. Robert Weddle, a Leesport, Pa. native with the 89th Military Police Brigade, III Corps, and his military working dog, Elmo, listen to instructions prior to a "search" demonstration. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jesus J. Aranda, Task Force Lightning Public Affairs)

# Soldiers and Working Dogs: Bond of Brothers

By Pfc. Jesus J. Aranda  
Task Force Lightning PAO

According to many historians, the relationship between man and canine dates back more than 12,000 years. This is evidenced by the mummified remains of canines found resting aside pharaohs in some Egyptian tombs.

During days long past, wolves were believed to instinctively follow hunters into the wild in search of prey. Utilizing man's intelligence and use of tools to easily fell

large prey to their benefit, the wolves, in turn, would lead men to the areas where these animals dwelled by using their keen instincts and sense of smell. This symbiotic relationship has evolved over time to one of camaraderie and, even brotherhood.

For Staff Sgt. Robert Weddle, a Leesport, Pa. native with the 89th Military Police Brigade, III Corps, and his military working dog, Elmo, the bond goes beyond the bond shared between most Soldiers in a traditional unit.

"We have a brotherly bond, because I look out for Elmo and if anyone ever hurt him things could get ugly," Weddle laughed, petting Elmo, a feisty Belgian Malinois.

Weddle, unlike most military dog handlers, has only enjoyed a partnership with Elmo for a short three months, only one of which being prior to deploying to Iraq's Contingency Operating Base Speicher, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

A lifelong dog lover, Weddle sprang at the opportunity to work with dogs when offered, despite a traumatic experience with a dog as a child.

"When I started this, I was scared of dogs, having been bitten by two when I was a kid," Weddle said. "Sometimes you have to face your fears and it's the best thing I have ever done."

Completing extensive training in the field, Weddle met with a jarring hurdle in his progression through the career of dog handling.

"My previous dog was injured in a kennel while I was at Fort Hood," Weddle said.

With the possibility of his deployment being cancelled, Weddle pleaded with his superiors to be allowed the opportunity to deploy. Weddle was reassigned partners, meeting, his now lifelong friend, Elmo.

This limited amount of time shared with a new dog can pres-

ent a stark challenge to handlers, whom typically partner with their dogs at least a year prior to deploying.

"The more your dog trusts you, the less aggressive the dog will be and trust you in return," Weddle said.

It's the trust between the dog and the handler that makes the team successful, according to Weddle. However, just as between people, the development of trust does not happen in an instant. Instead, trust is developed over time, through a series of accomplishments, and failures, trials and triumphs.

"The building of trust varies between the handler and the dog," Weddle said. "It took me about two months and we're still building it."

He continued, "Every day you spend with the dog you gain more and more trust."

Weddle believes the best method of building the trust necessary for a winning team is built not unlike one would build trust with a younger sibling.

"I had to work extra hard with Elmo," Weddle said, due to their brief time together. "Feeding him out of my hand, playing fetch, sleeping with him, singing to him, reading to him, just going the extra mile to build that trust and get used to each other."

Elmo is one of many military working dogs stationed in Northern Iraq whose primary mission is to assist military personnel keeping Iraqi and U.S. citizens and personnel safe on missions. Dogs keep this tradition of service alive and well, a tradition dating back to the American Revolution.

"Our mission is to support units in the division and area of operations," said Weddle. "The dogs provide support such as explosive support, narcotic detecting support, and trackers to facilitate and accomplish the mission."

Today's mission can be seen as strangely mirroring the early partnership between man and wolves on hunts, both sides journeying out into the unknown while relying on each other. It's this mutual dependency that seems to never waver.

One cannot help but wonder whether or not the millennia of fraternal reliance and partnership between man and dog cause either, or both, to react or behave more alike one another.

"They're just like people," said Weddle. "They have their own personalities, sense of humors, and everything. They are one of a kind and every dog is different."

"We all have nicknames for our dogs, just like Soldiers," Weddle said. "My dog is nicknamed 'Ritalin Dog', he's really hyper."

In return, Weddle noticed the Soldiers in his unit, and possibly the Army as a whole, behave with a "pack mentality."

"We come together like a team quickly, like two dogs in a pack," Weddle smiled. "The Soldiers in our unit look out for our partners and each other. We have a pack mentality."

The question of whether or not man has come to subconsciously mirror the mannerisms of their eldest comrades, or vice versa, may never be fully resolved. What cannot be questioned is the utility of military working dogs to daily operations and combat related missions.

# Re-enlistments Continue to Rise Across Multi - National Division - North

The reenlistment rate in the MND-N continues to rise despite the arduous and dangerous conditions that Iraq sometimes present to Soldiers. From 1 October – 28 December 2008, OPCON units within MND-N have reenlisted a total of 2,081 Soldiers. The rise in the number of Soldiers reenlisting has been an unexpected development of this prolonged mission to defeat insurgents.

So why do Soldiers reenlist? Though there have not been any recent studies made which connect the recent decline of the economy to the increase in reenlistment rate; most Soldiers will state the obvious when speaking about their decision to raise their right hand. Many MND-N Soldiers, in serving Northern Iraq, are more actively involved in improving the economy of the beleaguered nation of Iraq. Still, the benefits are very apparent to some.



Gen. David H. Petraeus, commanding general, U.S. Central Command, administers the U.S. military Oath of Re-enlistment to re-enlisting Soldiers at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Dec. 25.

## *What's in does a Soldier get from Re-enlistment?*

- Job security  
(includes pay and steady income with annual pay raises)
- Health and dental care
- Housing and housing allowance
- Separate rations
- Retirement benefits
- Educational opportunities
- Promotions
- Training
- Career enhancement and satisfaction
- Travel and experience
- Enlistment bonuses
- College education

In spite of multiple deployments, despite knowing of the possibility of another deployment, and past all the tangible benefits that Army can offer; Soldiers stay because there is a sense of duty and the love for what this nation stands for.

“There is only one Soldier actively serving in the U.S. Army who is a draftee. All of you Soldiers in Iraq volunteered. Each and every one of you. You raised your hands and said ‘I will.’” Said Command Sgt. Maj.

Lawrence K. Wilson, command sgt. maj., Multi-National Forces - Iraq, to an audience of lower-enlisted Soldiers. “You’ve all made history and will continue to make history.”

There is a sense of being a part of something special; to do something a common person can’t do in a lifetime. It is about being a part of something that is bigger than them and making a difference in the world.

Our Soldiers today are dedicated, committed, and they do what they do as an All Volunteer Force.



Gen. David H. Petraeus, commanding general, U.S. Central Command, and a key figure in the Coalition Force progress in Iraq, thanked all Soldiers who committed to continuing service of their country on Christmas morning, Dec. 25, 2009.



# New Security Agreement: Hot Topic Among Criminal Justice Council

By Staff Sgt. Mary R. Mittlesteadt  
11th Public Affairs Detachment

The fourth Kirkuk Criminal Justice Council conference was held at the Iraqi Police Academy here Dec. 31 to discuss the implementation of the security agreement and its impact on the Kirkuk Province.

The event was significant because it took place on the eve of the effective date for the security agreement and the Iraqi Army commanders from the Kirkuk Province were also in attendance, said Capt. Jennifer Venghaus, the command judge advocate for 18th Engineer Brigade and rule of law specialist for Kirkuk Province.

The topics discussed at the conference included the implementation of the security agreement, Iraqi jurisdiction on Coalition force troops, arrests and search warrants, and procedures for the Iraqi police to detain Iraqi Army soldiers.

"It is the beginning of a new year, but it is also the dawning of a new day for Iraq," said Lt. Col. David Snodgrass, the deputy commanding officer for 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division and a guest speaker at the conference. "The people of Iraq have come through a lot of adversity throughout the past five



Maj. Gen. Jamal Thakr Bakr, police chief for the province of Kirkuk, speaks at the Iraqi Police Academy in Kirkuk, Dec. 31, to an audience at the Criminal Justice Council about the new security agreement. The agreement between the U.S. military and the government of Iraq was implemented across the nation beginning Jan. 1. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Mary R. Mittlesteadt, 11th Public Affairs Detachment)



Local police and Iraqi Army leadership ask the panel questions during the Criminal Justice Council conference Dec 31 at the Iraqi Police Academy in Kirkuk City, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Mary R. Mittlesteadt, 11th Public Affairs Detachment)

***"It is the beginning of a new year,  
but it is also the dawning of a new  
day for Iraq."***

-Lt. Col. David Snodgrass,  
deputy commanding officer, 3rd IBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

years," he added.

The council panel, which includes all the provincial judges and Maj. Gen. Jamal Thakr Bakr, police chief for the Province of Kirkuk, took turns reading their specific areas of interest within the security agreement to the attendees. After the panel elaborated on specific topics related to rule of law in Kirkuk, they opened the floor to discussion.

Snodgrass briefed the attendees on how U.S. Soldiers in Kirkuk will comply with the new security agreement. "The United States will recognize the sovereignty of Iraq," he said, adding that the U.S. remains committed to supporting the Iraqi Security Forces and the Government of Iraq as they improve their capabilities.

The security agreement, implemented across the nation of Iraq starting January 1, 2009, sets the procedures under which U.S. military will conduct operations. Under the new security agreement, U.S. forces will work closely with their ISF counterparts with the government of Iraq in the lead.



# New elementary school opens in





# in the province of Kirkuk

By Spc. Karla P. Elliott,  
11th Public Affairs Detachment

As the security situation in Iraq continues to improve, the number of infrastructure projects around Kirkuk Province are on the rise. On Jan. 12, local village leaders, Sons of Iraq members, the school head master, teachers and future students, along with U.S. Forces, celebrated one of them - the grand opening of a new elementary school in Atshiyana village.

Overall, the ceremony was a great success according to Hawijah council representative Amar Ali Al Hamdany. "Without a school, how can you educate yourself?" he asked. "We now have 240 students who can look forward to a better future because of this school," he continued.

**"We now have 240 students who can look forward to a better future."**

-Amar Ali Hamdany,  
Hawijah Council Representative

Throughout the day of the ceremony, Sons of Iraq members distributed goods for the school and children. They passed out more than 400 pencils, 75 notebooks and 100 T-shirts.

U.S. Civil Affairs Soldiers joined the locals in the celebration. Having followed the project for more than three months, one Soldier expressed his joy for the newly opened school.

"I've been checking on the progress of this project since October," said Spc. Christopher Loflin, with Detachment 1, B Co., 490th Civil Affairs Battalion. "I'm glad to finally see that the children now have a place to learn and grow in an Iraqi community."

In the past two months, the province of Kirkuk has celebrated the opening of four brand new schools and renovated three others.

This school construction, a project under the Iraqi Commander's Emergency Relief Program, is part of many efforts to come for rebuilding and expanding the education system all around the area. Although there are many school projects taking place around the province, this school is unique in the region because of where it was built.



*The Mayor of Atshiyana Village cuts the ribbon to officially open a newly constructed school in Kirkuk Province, Iraq Jan. 12. (U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian L. Short.)*



*A member of the Sons of Iraq hands out T-shirts to students during a ceremony officially opening the new school in the village of Atshiyana, Kirkuk Province, Iraq Jan. 12. The Sons of Iraq provided shirts, pencils and notebooks for the children to use and wear while attending classes at the school. (U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian L. Short.)*

"The school lies on the fault line between two sub-districts," said 1st Lt. John Flanagan, platoon leader with D Company, 1st Battalion, 67th Armor Regiment, attached to 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. "So it was good to see Hawijah council members working well with the Multaka Sons of Iraq to open this school," continued Flanagan, a native of Harrisburg, Pa.

A total of nine schools, a combination of new construction and renovation projects, are slated to open in the next few months.



# SOI Transfer made official

*Progress being made in Diyala*

Story by  
Multi-National Division – North PAO  
Photos by Spc Opal Vaughn  
14th Public Affairs Detachment

**D**iyala Governor Ra'ad al'Tamimi, Diyala Operations Center commander, Staff Lt. Gen. Abd-Al-Karim Al-Safak, Maj. Gen. Robert Caslen, commanding general, Multi-National Division – North, and Col. Burt Thompson, commander, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, conducted a Combined Transfer Ceremony to complete the official transfer of the Sons of Iraq contracts to Government of Iraq control at Forward Operating Base Lion, Jan. 4.

"It is a historic day, not only for Diyala, but for all of Iraq; with this new agreement, members of the Sons of Iraq will con-

*"With this new agreement,  
members of the Sons of Iraq  
will continue to assist in the  
Security of Iraq."*

*-Maj. Gen. Robert L. Caslen Jr., commanding general, Multi-National Division – North*

tinue to assist in the security of Iraq," Caslen stated. "We have transitioned registered SOI members with new positions in trade work, and some of them will ultimately work for the Iraqi Police or Iraqi Army."

Also in attendance were Multi-National Corps – Iraq Deputy Commander for Operations, Maj. Gen. Michael Ferriter, and Multi-National Division – North Deputy Commander for Operations, Brig. Gen. James Nixon.

Governor Tamimi addressed the audience of Coalition forces and Iraqi Army soldiers, and thanked them all for being a witness to history in the making.

"In the name of God, the most gracious and merci-



Diyala governor Ra'ad al'Tamimi addresses an audience of his Iraqi Army and Coalition counterparts, thanking them for their presence in witnessing history with the official transfer of the Sons of Iraq during a press conference, Jan. 4

ful," Tamimi said, "we sign these contracts as witness and proof that the Sons of Iraq are indeed our sons. They are our brothers. They are indeed the ones who participated in the fighting against terrorism and providing security in this province."

Thompson closed out the ceremony saying, "We appreciate all of the work that has been put into this project. We also appreciate all of the Iraqi Army and Coalition forces who have allowed this to happen and taken this project so seriously; we thank you."



Diyala governor Ra'ad al'Tamimi and Diyala Operations Center Commander, Staff Lt. Gen. Abd-Al-Karim Al-Safak, sign contracts which complete the official transfer of the Sons of Iraq, during a press conference while at Forward Operating Base Lion, Jan. 4.



# HEY DOC?

*Answers on life, love and the wound that never healed*

**Q. Hey, Doc! I've been in country for a couple of months now, and I'm running low on my birth control pills. Before I deployed someone told me about getting my prescription medication refills mailed to me. What's that all about? — J.A. COB Speicher.**

**A.** Good question! You should have deployed with 180 days of medication, and your refill prescriptions should be listed on your profile with the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP) administered by Express-Scripts. Express-Scripts is designed to provide prescription drug services to patients who are on chronic or continuous medication therapy, for example birth control or blood pressure medications taken on a daily basis for an indefinite period of time. Medications such as pain medication or antibiotics that are designed to be used for an acute illness or for a short period of time should be obtained from your unit aid station (BAS) or the local Combat Support Hospital (CSH).

**The Website:** [www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE](http://www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE)

**Verify Your Account:** At least one month before your current medication supply runs out, you should log on to the Express-Scripts website to ensure your refill prescriptions are on your profile, and to verify your current shipping address here in country.

**Registration/Account Creation in Express-Scripts:** If you have not created an account with Express-Scripts, simply log on to the Express-Scripts website, and click on the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP) Program hyperlink available at: [http://www.express-scripts.com/custom/dod/ben\\_message/](http://www.express-scripts.com/custom/dod/ben_message/). Then, click on the Activate Your Online Account hyperlink. After that, fill in the required information by following the prompts.

**Change of Address in Express-Scripts:** Log on to the Express-Scripts website. Ensure you have registered/created an account, and your address is up to date. Choose the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP) Program hyperlink. Choose the Log On Now hyperlink. Select the Account Settings hyperlink. Select the Patient Information hyperlink. Follow the prompts to enter your temporary mailing address. If you have issues changing your address to your Theater/Unit address, contact your primary care provider (Battalion Surgeon or Physicians Assistant), and have them submit address changes for you through the Pharmacoeconomic Center TMOP system. Express-Scripts can also be contacted through commercial telephone at 1-866-DoD TMOP (1-866-363-8667) CONUS or 1-866-ASK 4PEC (1-866-275-4732) OCONUS.

**Refill a Prescription:** Log on to the Express-Scripts website. Ensure you have registered/created an account, and your address is up to date. Choose the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP) Program hyperlink. Choose the Log On Now hyperlink. Enter your user name and password. Select the My Prescriptions hyperlink. Select the Order Refills hyperlink. Then follow the prompts, selecting the medication(s) that you wish to refill.

Remember, it is very important to be proactive with your Express-Scripts account to ensure there is no gap in your medication therapy. Mail takes approximately two weeks to arrive at your location from CONUS. If you run out of medications, make sure you go to your unit BAS ASAP and they will assist in getting a few days' supply for you. Thanks again for your question!

**Q: Hey doc! My buddy was MEDEVACed out of country last week. How can I check on his status? O.T., Speicher.**

**A:** Your BDE Surgeon receives daily and weekly patient status reports from the MND-N Patient Administration Officer. Additionally your BDE Surgeon has access to a couple different web based application which will allow him/her to find out the current location and medical status of anyone in the Task Force who has been evacuated out of theatre. Check with your unit health provider for help.

**Q: Hey Doc! Can cats catch rabies? — C.L., Warhorse.**



**A:** Yes. Any "wild" animal has the potential to carry rabies or one of many other potentially deadly illnesses. Please avoid intentional contact and you won't get sick. See and avoid!!

If you have a question you'd like to ask the Doc, e-mail [heydoc@id25.army.smil.mil](mailto:heydoc@id25.army.smil.mil) or [heydoc@25id.ds.army.mil](mailto:heydoc@25id.ds.army.mil). Hey Doc is not intended for emergency situations. If you are experiencing an emergency, seek care immediately at your supporting medical treatment facility.



Lt. Col. John Smyrski is a board certified Family Medicine and Aerospace Medicine physician with specialty training in Public Health, a former Army Aviator, and the Task Force Lightning and Multi-National Division-North Surgeon.

# MND-N HEROES DEMONSTRATE ARMY VALUES



PFC Rachele Meeks, C Troop, 6-9 CAV  
Arroyo Grande, California

PFC Meeks is the Comanche Troop Communications Specialist and a key member of daily operations on and off patrol. Since arriving on FOB Sykes, PFC Meeks has demonstrated great willingness to learn, adapt, and work until the job is complete far beyond her current rank and even above her peers in other Troops.



EOD 1 Britton Titus, EOD MU 3, CO 31  
Boise, Idaho

EOD1 Titus identified part of a foreign rocket motor protruding from the ground approximately 100m from the COB SPEICHER flight line and 300m from inhabited buildings. Titus used tamping and precise charge placement, disposing of the rocket with zero collateral damage.



PFC Jason Pagan 3HBCT, 1CDHBT  
Brooksville, Florida

PFC Pagan sacrificed his personal time to ensure the proper installation and operation of more than 40 VOIP devices for several critical sections within the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team. PFC Pagan readily shared his knowledge of the system components to correct a critical outage on the TAC JNN, ensuring availability of SIPR and NIPR resources to all elements in the battle space.



PFC Andrew Schmit, MGS Platoon, B Co 1-5 IN  
Randolph, Wisconsin

PFC Schmit, a combat medic, reacted to a grenade attack on his convoy with superior professionalism and direction in treating a Soldier injured during the blast. Due to his unwavering care and duty, the injured Soldier returned to duty faster than expected.



PFC Drew Tedford, 1st SBCT, 25th ID  
Denver, Colorado

PFC Tedford volunteered to scan a suspected minefield with a PSS-14 in order to pinpoint the UXO. His skill with the PSS-14 assisted the EOD team to quickly determine that there was no buried UXO and render the area clear.



PFC Earl Vallejo, 84th EN BN  
San Diego, California

When a 3 vehicle Iraqi Security Force convoy came quickly from the rear during a mission, PFC Vallejo, the convoy gunner, used the proper steps of EOF. Due to PFC Vallejo's quick thinking, he was able to properly apply EOF steps to avoid an incident of fratricide.



SGT Charles I. Diorio, 1-8IN, 4ID  
Texas City, Texas

SGT Diorio assumed duties as Alpha Company, 1-8 IN, Command Post NCOIC and immediately distinguished himself as a leader. Diorio constantly improved his leaders', peers' and subordinates' situational awareness and tracking methods of combat operations and friendly units patrolling in AO Eagle.



SGT Charlie R. Douglas, HHC, 325th BSB  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

In the absence of his platoon sergeant, SGT Douglas took on the responsibility, assisting, and eventually leading, in the training of over 40 4th Iraqi Army HSC NCOs on advance marksmanship, first aid, weapons maintenance and operations, and night fire familiarization.



SGT Randall Mead, 1st SBCT, 25th ID  
Sterling, Illinois

SGT Mead, the White Cell NCOIC on FOB Caldwell, has been a critical element in the daily operations and cleanliness of the FOB. Mead has completed a joint inspection of over 117 structures, correcting deficiencies identified by TF Safe and is presently correcting over 1,000 minor deficiencies.



SK1 David Adkins, EODMU1  
Middleburg, Florida

SK1 Adkins regularly helps the command boost the morale of the crew by organizing movie nights, command barbecues, 5K runs, and has saved TF Troy thousands of dollars by obtaining insulation material needed for construction projects within the compound.



SPC Mathew Adams 1st SBCT, 25th ID  
Dallas, Texas

When a military ambulance struck a landmine during a mission, Adams, without hesitation or concern for himself, crawled through the downed vehicle to an injured Soldier in back to administer first aid. Adams then directed a ground MEDEVAC to bring the injured soldier back to FOB Caldwell, reducing the number of soldiers in harms way.



SPC Christopher Brown  
HHC1-24IN, 1st SBCT, 25th ID

SPC Brown reacted quickly to the report of a Soldier convulsing uncontrollably by assessing the casualty and directing the safe movement of the Soldier. Brown's knowledge, motivation and leadership capabilities have helped keep his fellow Soldiers safe and identified him as a valuable asset to the 1-24 IN REG Medical Platoon.



# MND-N HEROES DEMONSTRATE ARMY VALUES



SPC Forrest C. Hull, 1/5 INF, 25TH  
Auburn, Alabama

SPC Hull, along with his military working dog Flopper, uncovered a small weapon cache outside FOB Warhorse while on a mission to confirm or deny possible treats in the area. Alongside ISF counterparts, SPC Hull and Flopper assured the safety of many of their fellow Soldiers.



SPC Alma Jimenez, 643rd EN CO, 84th EN BN  
San Antonio, Texas

SPC Jimenez denied both ends of a culvert that posed a serious threat to coalition forces during a mission. Realizing the culvert was too small to drill, SPC Jimenez stepped up and told her leaders that she could do it all because of her size. SPC Jimenez crawled through several feet of mud and water in order to drill, weld, and emplace two culvert grates.



SPC Andrew Kelly, HQ PLT, FSC, 84th EN BN  
Villa Rica, Georgia

SPC Kelly has served as a Wrecker Driver in the Service and Recovery section in the FSC motor pool, and has completed eight Wrecker missions in the last month. SPC Kelly has continued to take on assignments above and beyond his duties, including mentoring junior Soldiers in a multitude of tasks.



SPC Ronnie Kennedy, 523rd EN CO, 84th EN BN  
Andrews, Texas

SPC Kennedy's technical know how has been essential in keeping the platoon's pacing items fully mission capable, removing priority Engineer assets from the deadline report, and allowing the engineers to be successful in completing their mission.



SPC Krishna K. Menon, S1, EN BN(CE)  
Kerala, India

SPC Menon advised and taught staff officers from the rank of 2LT to LTC on a myriad of Human Resources procedures and functions, enabling staff officers to comprehend a systems approach in order to monitor their Soldiers and identify faults in their current personnel tracking systems.



SPC Julio Orozco, A CO 2STB, IEW PLT  
San Diego, California

SPC Julio Orozco has been the lead vehicle gunner for over 300 route clearance patrols for TF Sapper, and he is directly responsible for the discovery and disabling of several IEDs since the start of his deployment.



SPC David Ward, 1st SBCT, 25th ID  
Winslow, Maine

Responding to a night rocket attack on JBB Balad, SPC Ward located the initiation device for a multiple rocket launch system concealed under dried grass. His alertness and commitment to scanning his sector in very low-visibility conditions allowed for the discovery of an area that would not have otherwise been searched.



SSG Benjamin Brown, HHD 91st MP BN  
St. Louis, Missouri

With the help of his military working dog Amis, SSG Brown located a small weapons cache on a berm in the Jabouri Peninsula.



SSG Brad Carey, C/1-12 CAV  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

SSG Carey and his maintenance team have developed a "Maintenance Monday" where they work hand in hand with the Iraqi Mechanics and the Iraqi vehicle drivers of the 5-47 IA. SSG Carey developed classes on PMCS as well as beginner's drivers training in coordination with the HSC/5-47 IA Company Commander.



SSG Andres Martinez, 2-82 FA, 3HBCT, 25ID  
El Paso, Texas

While on a joint patrol in Saddam's market, SSG Martinez positively identified the individual responsible for the HME attack on his patrol on 23 JAN 09. The individual was apprehended by 2-3-1 IA. SSG Martinez's sworn statement and a positive x-spray test were sufficient evidence for the IA to detain the suspect.



SGT Charles Campbell, 9th EN BN, 3-66 SBCT  
Toledo, Ohio

During a route clearance mission, an AT mine struck a the patrol instantly immobilizing it. SGT Campbell begin scanning the area around the damaged vehicle for secondary IEDs. SGT Campbell found a second IED on the path recovery assets would have traveled to get to the damaged vehicle.



SGT LORD, SPC CREWDSON, PFC LOEFFLER  
A CO 2STB, IEW PLT

These soldiers went above and beyond to obtain materials and to build the SCIF. In the space of two weeks they had transformed an old, decrepit building into a clean, secure facility that met the requirements for initial certification. Their efforts will continue to pay dividends to the Black Jack Brigade.

# OIF Great Aloha Run

## Keeps Island Spirit Alive in Iraq

Story by Staff Sgt. Tim Meyer

3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs, 25th Infantry Division

Photos by Pfc. Jesus J. Aranda, Task Force Lightning Public Affairs

**M**ore than 1,000 Soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division, attached units, other service members and civilians helped keep the spirit of Aloha alive in Iraq by participating in the 2nd annual six-mile race known as the Operation Iraqi Freedom Great Aloha Run, Feb. 8.

"This is part of the Great Aloha Run . . . in Honolulu," said Maj. Gen. Robert L. Caslen, Jr., commanding general, 25th Inf. Div. "It's been organized by Miss Carole Kai . . . we want to thank you for what you're doing, and we're honored to represent the Great Aloha Run here in Tikrit, Iraq," he continued.

Proceeds from the 2009 OIF Great Aloha Run t-shirt sales netted approximately \$2,500, which will be added to the proceeds of this year's Great Aloha Run in Hawaii. The 25th annual 8.15 mile race is scheduled in Honolulu, Feb. 16.

In 2007, more than 200 servicemembers deployed in Iraq and Kuwait ran in the first OIF Great Aloha Run, an 8.15 mile race that raised \$2,563 for Hawaii's charitable organizations.

"If the average American wanted to see what's right with America, they would see it in each and every one of you," Caslen told the runners before the race. "...for the values you represent, for the commitment to service, and the call to duty you make every day."

Air Force Staff Sgt. Joshua Rapp, a Lodi, Wis. native with the 21st Operational Weather Squadron, attached to the 18th Expeditionary Weather Squadron, finished first among male runners. Sgt. Elizabeth Sparks, a St. Claire, Mo. native with the Army National Guard's 1175th Military Police Company, 269th Military Police Battalion finished first among female runners.

Units that participated in the 2009 OIF Great Aloha Run included the 25th Inf. Div. headquarters staff, the 3rd Inf. Bde. Combat Team, the 10th Combat Aviation Bde. and the 75th Fires Bde., among others. Soldiers from the 3rd Inf. Bde. Combat Team ran an extra 2.15 miles, to match the length of the race in Hawaii.



More than 1,000 Soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division, other service members and civilians, ran six miles in the Operation Iraqi Freedom Great Aloha Run, Feb. 8, to mirror the 25th annual Great Aloha Run that will take place Feb. 16 in Honolulu. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Maj. Raymond Rodriguez, G-1 sgt. maj., Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 25th Special Troops Battalion, 25th Infantry Division)



Air Force Staff Sgt. Joshua Rapp, a Lodi, Wis. native with the 21st Operational Weather Squadron, attached to the 18th Expeditionary Weather Squadron, breaks the tape as he finishes first place in the Operation Iraqi Freedom Great Aloha Run. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jesus J. Aranda, Task Force Lightning public affairs)



(Right) Sgt. Elizabeth Sparks, a St. Claire, Mo. native with the Army National Guard 1175th Military Police Company, 269th Military Police Battalion, breaks the tape at the finishing line of the Great Aloha Run with a time of 0:44:19, Feb. 8, at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq.

(Left) The Great Aloha Run, a six-mile course originating with Hawaii's 25th Infantry Division as an annual Division run, is held on COB Speicher welcoming the participation of all military and civilian personnel.

(U.S. Army photos by Pfc. Jesus J. Aranda, Task Force Lightning Public Affairs)





# 'Blackjack' Brigade Partners with Iraqi Security Forces at FOB Warrior

Story and photo by Pfc. Justin Naylor  
2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division

The Iraqi and American flags were marched together proudly as the 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team from Fort Hood, Texas, assumed responsibility of Forward Operating Base Warrior, Feb. 14, during a provincial partnership ceremony attended by private and public Iraqi citizens, Iraqi policeman, Iraqi Soldiers and Coalition forces.

The area was formally the responsibility of the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division with assistance from the 18th Engineer Brigade.

The "Black Jack" Brigade arrives at a time of reconstruction in the province of Kirkuk. Col. Ryan Gonsalves, commander, 2BCT, spoke of the importance of a strong partnership between all communities during his address.



Col. Ryan Gonsalves, commander, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division claps along to the 1st Cavalry Division song "Garry Owen" at the Kirkuk Provincial Partnership Ceremony, Feb. 14, at Forward Operating Base Warrior. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Justin Naylor, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division public affairs)

"The upcoming year will be an important one for the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division, because we will learn a great deal from our partners," said Gonsalves, in reference to the Iraqi Security Forces.

"We have a great deal of respect for your competence and professionalism and we welcome the opportunity to support and train together as brothers."

The current operational climate in Iraq has changed, Gonsalves noted. While there is still a very real security threat, the emphasis is on reconstruction and enabling Iraqi leaders to solve Iraqi problems. Another important partnership is with the provincial reconstruction teams.

"Your expertise, continuity and passion for helping put the final brick in the wall of Iraqi reconstruction is what allows Coalition forces who move in and out of this area to be successful," Gonsalves said of the PRT. "We see our relationship as one of equals, and we will support your efforts with every means at our disposal."

Gonsalves also addressed the importance the province of Kirkuk plays in the reconciliation process between the different ethnicities who call Iraq home.

"Kirkuk represents an opportunity for Iraq to prove its ability to resolve differences through meaningful discussion, with all parties represented," said Gonsalves. "Each one of us believes that the future of Iraq is bright, but we still have work to do. As partners, we will share in the labor ahead of us, and each one of us will feel personal pride when that goal is reached."

Lt. Col. Terry Cook, commander, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd BCT is partnered with the Kirkuk Provincial Police and has taken a new view of the Kirkuk region.

"Goals have changed in this region," said Cook. "Without a spirit of partnership between Iraqi and Coalition forces, we cannot hope to accomplish any change in this province. We have to be willing to include the Iraqis in everything we do, and we need to share our intelligence and missions with them so they can maintain awareness of how our presence is affecting the region."

Cook emphasized how he wants himself and the Soldiers in his command to feel about their mission here that, "We consider ourselves to now be citizens of Kirkuk province."

"Together we will help improve the future of Iraq," said Lt. Col. Andy Shoffner, commander, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd BCT, who is directly partnered with the 15th Iraqi Army Brigade.

Shoffner said that the Iraqis must build their own future—and that CF should help in any way possible—to ensure a safe and politically and economically sustainable Iraq.

"I believe that it is through, with and by the Iraqis that we can come up with a solution to help keep peace in Kirkuk and also to improve the economic situation for Iraqis in the province," said Shoffner.

"They have done a good job so far in reconciling the different ethnicities and are on their way to making a viable future for Iraq. Together we can build the capacity of the Iraqis in the Kirkuk province."



# 10th CAB Medic

## Takes Initiative, Provides First-Aid Training to Iraqi Police

By Sgt. 1st Class Dan Carr  
Task Force Falcon Public Affairs Office

A 10th Combat Aviation Brigade medic recently took the opportunity of having Iraqi Policemen assigned to his team to teach the local law enforcement some life-savings skills.

While spending Dec. 29 – Jan. 4 with Iraqi Police assigned to the Pathfinders of Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 10th CAB on a mission here, Staff Sgt. Derek Sheppard, senior company medic, learned the IPs receive no formal first-aid training.

Once he realized the need, Sheppard took it upon himself to offer the training during the down time between missions.



Staff Sgt. Derek Sheppard, senior medic for Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, looks on as two Iraqi Police demonstrate how to practice applying a tourniquet, Jan. 2. Sheppard provided basic first-aid training to the Iraqi Police attached to his team Dec. 29 – Jan. 4 after learning the policemen receive no formal first-aid instruction. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dan Carr, Task Force Falcon Public Affairs Office)

“Being a medic, it is my job to ensure the members of my team are all trained on the basics of first aid,” Sheppard explained, saying that if the IPs were going to be a part of the Pathfinder team, they should have basic buddy-aid capabilities.

“I started out with how to control bleeding and progressed to how to apply a tourniquet,” said Sheppard. “I know they have everything they need to be successful.”

The IPs do not usually handle first-aid issues; if one of them is wounded, they are forced to rely on outside help, which could waste vital life-saving time. For that reason, Iraqi Police 2nd Lieutenant Muhammid Usef Hamid said, the IPs appreciated the lessons.

“We don't normally get this training,” Hamid said, “but because of excellent training from Pathfinders we are better. We are stronger and can fight insurgents with confidence.”



(Above) Staff Sgt. Derek Sheppard, senior medic for Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, demonstrates how to properly apply a tourniquet, Jan. 2. Sheppard provided basic first-aid training to the Iraqi Police attached to his team Dec. 29 – Jan. 4 after learning the policemen receive no formal first-aid instruction. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dan Carr, Task Force Falcon Public Affairs Office)

(Right) Staff Sgt. Derek Sheppard, senior medic for Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, demonstrates how to stop a bleeding leg wound as Iraqi Police look on Jan. 2. Sheppard provided basic first-aid training to the Iraqi Police attached to his team Dec. 29 – Jan. 4 after learning the policemen receive no formal first-aid instruction. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dan Carr, Task Force Falcon Public Affairs Office)





# Iraqi Army Furthers Community Relations in Local Neighborhood

Story and photos by  
Spc. Cynthia Teears  
11th Public Affairs Detachment

**A**n Iraqi Army company visited several homes in the Al Karama Neighborhood during a community relations mission in Mosul, Iraq, Jan. 6.

Major Ali, commander, 2nd Company, 3rd Battalion, 9th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division and his Soldiers, accompanied by their brothers-in-arms from Company D, 1st Battalion, 8th Regiment,

U.S. Army Soldiers, talked with several residents about the community's security during the mission.

The day saw the advancement in the continuing relationship between the Ali's Soldiers and the people of the Karama neighborhood.



Iraqi Army Soldiers and U.S. Army Soldiers share chi before a community relations mission in Mosul, Jan. 6. Major Ali, commander, 2nd Company, 3rd Battalion, 9th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division visited the Al Karama Neighborhood accompanied by Company D, 1st Battalion, 8th Regiment, U.S. Army Soldiers. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Cynthia Teears, 11th Public Affairs Detachment)



Major Ali, commander, 2nd Company, 3rd Battalion, 9th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, speaks with a resident of the Al Karama neighborhood during a community relations mission in Mosul, Jan. 6. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Cynthia Teears, 11th Public Affairs Detachment)



Major Ali, commander, 2nd Company, 3rd Battalion, 9th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, talks to a member of the Al Karama neighborhood during a community relations mission in Mosul, Jan. 6. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Cynthia Teears, 11th Public Affairs Detachment)





The Mayor of Riyadh, Ahmad Hussein Mohammed, gives a speech before guests invited to the ceremonial transfer of the Riyadh Train Station, formerly known as Patrol Base Howell, in Riyadh Jan. 3. Patrol Base Howell was closed and turned over to the Iraqi government as the Iraqi and U.S. security agreement is starting to be implemented in the Kirkuk Province.

# U.S. Forces Transfer Riyadh Train Station Back to Iraqis

*Putting Iraq in the Hands of Iraqis*

By  
Spc Karla P. Elliott  
11th Public Affairs Detachment

As part of the new security agreement and improved security in the city of Riyadh, Coalition forces held a ceremony there to transfer the Riyadh Train Station, formerly known as Patrol Base Howell, back to the Kirkuk Department of Transportation Jan. 3.

"I'm honored to be here this morning among you to mark the transfer of the Riyadh Train Station from Coalition forces to the people of Iraq," said Lt. Col. Kenneth R. Casey, commander of 1st Battalion, 67th Armor Regiment, attached to the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. "Today represents one of the many transitions happening across Iraq, with the improved security situation provided by the Iraqi Police, Iraqi Army, Sons of Iraq and U.S. Forces."

The transfer played an important part in CF efforts to start giving their areas of responsibility back to the Iraqis.

"Patrol Base Howell is a great example of what U.S. Forces are trying to do, which is to give the infrastructure back to the Iraqis to use for their intended purposes," Casey said. PB Howell has sheltered Coalition forces for more than a year and many Soldiers have called this place a home.

"It's hard for us to leave because this has been our home for a while," said Capt. Thomas Sturm, commander of D Co., 1st Battalion, 67th Armor Regt. "It's been great to live so close to the people that we serve here in the town of Riyadh, but it's an important step forward."

"We'll move on and continue to do what we do," said 1st Sgt. Michael Oliver,

1st Sgt., Co. D, 1-67th Armor Regt. "Although we're not here, we're still going to help them build a better country."

"The movement of American forces within Iraq shows the people that there is validity to the security agreement," said Sturm. "This is definitely a symbol of Iraqi sovereignty," he concluded.



Capt. Thomas B. Sturm, commander of Co. D, 1st Bn., 67th Armor Regt., attached to 3rd Bde. Combat Team, 25th Inf. Div., and Dr. Shakir Mahmood, Director of Transportation for the Kirkuk Province of Iraq, knock down the last temporary wall by the Riyadh Train Station, formerly known as Patrol Base Howell, in Riyadh Jan 3. Patrol Base Howell was closed and turned over to the Iraqi government as the Iraqi and U.S. security agreement is starting to be implemented in the Kirkuk Province.





# *A letter from the Chaplain*



By Chaplain (Maj.) David Shoffener

**F**ebruary always turns our thoughts toward love. Saint Valentine made sure of that. Love is a concept not often associated with the Army or the military in general.

When we think of the Army we think of strength, power, discipline, shock and awe. Yet, the scripture (especially the New Testament) demonstrates to us that Love is the most powerful force in our universe.

In fact, love is such a central theme in the New Testament, that you can hardly read or quote more than a couple of verses without including one that's main point is love. The most familiar verse in the Bible, (especially to avid football fans) John 3:16, "For God so Loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...", is all about God's love for us. Or how about the Greatest Commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength... 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 12:30-31). Or the verse you have heard at every wedding you have ever attended "Love is patient, love is kind,...love never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). God's love for us, our love for Him, our love for each other, all are very strong and oft listed themes, but the Apostle John takes it one step further, when he states in 1 John 4:16, "God is love."

If God is love, then love truly is the most powerful force in the universe. Men and women around the world, and throughout time have done amazing feats all for the sake of love. Love of country, love of an ideal, love of family, love for another, any one of these would be motivation enough for any of us to lay down the most precious thing we have, our very lives. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

As I was writing this article, a fellow Chaplain sent me a thought of the day, and it is right on target with this theme.

A noted doctor has listed several emotions which produce disease in human beings. Heading the list is fear, followed by frustration, rage, resentment, hatred, jealousy, envy, self-centeredness, and ambition. The one and only antidote that can save humans from these, he says, is love.

Love cures people - both the ones who give it and the ones who receive it.



Chaplain (Maj.) David Shoffener, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 25th Special Troops Battalion, 25th Infantry Division, speaks to an audience of Soldiers and civilian personnel during the National Prayer Breakfast on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq, Feb. 18. The event brought together military personnel in prayer for the well-being of our armed forces and people in need around the globe.

Love is not only powerful and motivating, love has a healing quality. Anybody who has ever had their mother kiss a "booboo" and have it instantly feel better understands the healing power of love. There is an old song that says, "what the world needs now, is love, sweet love, it's the only thing that there's just too little of." The words of that song are as true now as they were in 1965 when Jackie DeShannon sang them.

Our world and we as individuals are in desperate need of love. We are in need of its' strength, its' motivational effect, and its' healing power.

# Iraqi, U.S. Soldiers conduct combined air-assault

Story and photos by Spc. Jazz Burney  
3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public  
Affairs, 25th Infantry Division

In the early morning hours of Feb. 15, a few hundred Soldiers from the 4th Iraqi Army Division conducted a combined air-assault with U.S. Soldiers to clear and secure the Bichigan peninsula near Balad.

The A Troop of 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division and the 14th Iraqi Army Brigade Military Transition Team provided the Coalition support for the operation which began with a series of U-H 60 Black Hawk training rehearsals on the flight line of Forward Operating Base Paliwoda Feb. 14 through the actual operation the following day.

"The Iraqi Army initiated the idea for the operation that would include the efforts of 3-4 Cav. So as a MiTT our primary objective was to advise the 14th brigade commander and his staff of the planning procedures that had to be in place before this operation could be executed," said Maj. Darren Buss, operation officer, 14th Iraqi Army Bde MiTT.

"The IA have begun isolating the area through various security sweeps that will be continued daily; improving traffic flow by setting up four traffic control points; improving old roads while also creating new routes for less congestion in the city; and they have also been blocking crossing points along the river that were used by insurgents to cross to-and-from -- all these measures are to secure and protect the people of this region," he added.

The Iraqi Army turned to their MiTT advisors for ideas on



Sgt. 1st Class Travus Brandon, platoon sergeant, 3rd plt., A Trp., 3rd Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt., 25th Inf. Div. rehearses exiting a helicopter with 4th Iraqi Div. soldiers at FOB Paliwoda, Balad Feb. 14 as Iraqi and coalition Soldiers trained on loading and exiting helicopter procedures for a combined air assault operation that cleared and secured the Bichigan area near Balad.

how to maximize their available assets while also improving relations with Coalition forces. In the combined operation the Iraqi Army Soldiers learned to load and exit a helicopter and how to organize their force before and after arriving on their objective.

"Our role in the Iraqi Army's operation has been to help enable them to step forward and spear-head their own operations. We have done this by building their confidence and showing that they can continue to perform effectively before and during their operations," said Sgt. 1st Class Travus Brandon, platoon sergeant, 3rd plt., A Trp., 3rd Sqdn. 4th Cav. Regt., 25th Inf. Div.

"We are building upon their experience level by including the air-assault element to the operation, showing the Iraqi Army that they can handle a complex operation with an air-assault asset available. The end result will help combined coalition missions because they will bring their knowledge and training to the table for the completion of successful operations in Iraq," he continued.

During the mission the Iraqi Army captured two wanted criminals, found some small caches in the densely wooded orchards of the region and will continue to target terrorists and disrupt their travel routes to stop the flow of their munitions through Bichigan, according to Buss.

"With continual combined operations between Iraqi Army and Coalition forces such as this, the Iraqi security forces will continue to progress as a more effective fighting force to secure their towns and provide a safer environment for the people of Iraq," said 1st Lt. Steven Swan, a plt. leader in A Trp. who helped assist Iraqi forces during the operation.



The IA trained on loading and exiting helicopter procedures prior to a combined operation that cleared and secured the Bichigan area near Balad, Feb. 14.



# **Task Force Lightning's Fallen Warriors**

**We Will Never Forget Those Who Have Sacrificed**



**Sgt. Joshua Ward**

**3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team,  
1st Cavalry Division**



**Pfc. Albert Jex**

**3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team,  
1st Cavalry Division**



**Pfc. Jonathan Roberge**

**3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team,  
1st Cavalry Division**



**Chief Warrant Officer 3  
Philip Windorski**

**6th Cavalry Regiment, 10th  
Combat Aviation Brigade**



**Lt. Col. Gary Derby**

**3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team,  
1st Cavalry Division**



**Chief Warrant Officer 2  
Benjamin Todd**

**6th Cavalry Regiment, 10th  
Combat Aviation Brigade**



**Chief Warrant Officer 2  
Joshua Tillery**

**6th Cavalry Regiment, 10th  
Combat Aviation Brigade**



**Chief Warrant Officer 2  
Matthew Kelly**

**6th Cavalry Regiment, 10th  
Combat Aviation Brigade**



