

THE RAIDER

Tribe

January 2010

Vol. 1, Issue 4



"To The Objective!"

RAIDER 6

COLONEL JOHN NORRIS

4th SBCT COMMANDER



Fellow Raiders, Families, and Friends of the Raider Brigade,

Through the last few months we have been able to build strong ties with our Iraqi partners and improve unity of effort. Our friends and partners from the 6th and 9th Iraqi Army Divisions, have achieved great successes. I have read the reports, articles, and received the briefings from your commanders, that tell me you are growing the partnerships and bonds.

Your combined operations have arrested high level AQI members, found large amounts of explosives and weapons. These successes have helped secure the people of western Baghdad and most importantly, set the conditions for the upcoming elections in March.

Our efforts have not gone unnoticed. Our brigade's performance and reputation is well known and respected by all. We recently transitioned our higher headquarters, the 1st Cavalry Division to the 1st Armored Division. The publicly announced reduction of forces in Iraq has begun in earnest and leading the way through this process are the Raiders. This is why we were accelerated and why we are here now. General Odierno recently told me that he waited a long time for this brigade and that we were the reason why he fought the SECDEF for over 30 days in order to get the Raiders. We are delivering as anticipated.

Many of the Soldiers have had the rare opportunity to meet and talk with General Odierno, Lt. Gen. Jacoby, Chairman

of the Joint Chief of Staff, Adm. Mike Mullen, and Vice President Joe Biden. It has meant a lot to me and all the Raiders that they have taken time to come and visit with us and get a firsthand account of the great things the Raiders are doing.

A little while ago, I was honored to meet OIF wounded warriors that have come back to Iraq as a part of Operations Proper Exit. These warriors were severely injured in attacks on their last deployment. They bravely came back to Iraq to visit the troops, tell their story, and exit Iraq under their own power with some closure that was not previously afforded. Their spirits are amazingly high, and their stories are truly inspirational.

We have a big task in helping the Iraqi Security Forces get ready for the election on March 7th and are approaching a very critical time in our deployment. Our brigade is the strategic main effort, we sit at the center of gravity in Iraq, on top of the seat of the Iraqi Government. The same location that our enemy wishes to destroy. There are 17 Iraqi ministries in our area of operations, and along with our partners, we have the responsibility to protect them and facilitate the upcoming national elections. This is exactly what we have done and will continue to do until we redeploy. The battalions of this brigade have all performed superbly and everyone in this brigade should be justifiably proud of your accomplishments.

Finally I would like to tell you what



lies ahead for the Raider Brigade. We have a big task in helping the Iraqi Security Forces get ready for the election on March 7th. This is the decisive effort and once we have exhausted our efforts and supported the Iraqi Security Forces, making possible a safe and secure election, we will fully transition into the responsible reduction of forces.

This presents many challenges that the Raiders are ready for. We want to make sure that we DEPART Iraq correctly, leaving it a better place, providing what we can to help improve the Iraqi Security Forces, and setting the conditions for irreversible momentum. The Raider brigade and the Iraqi 6th and 9th divisions that we are partnered with, represent Iraq and the United States decisive effort--we secure Iraq's center of gravity. There is no greater

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RAIDER 7

CSM JEFFREY HUGGINS

4th SBCT COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR



Raiders,

We are entering into a new year, a new decade and new chapter in both the history of the Raider Brigade and the nation of Iraq.

With the Iraqi elections quickly approaching in March, we are witnessing our combined partnership, hard work and dedication pay off.

However, the enemy is more determined than ever to disrupt the election process, destabilize the country and attempt to show that our Iraqi partners are unable to keep their citizens safe.

We have continued to see desperate attacks by the enemy in the form of bombings and assassinations, designed to cause chaos and disruption. You must be ever-vigilant and prepared to defeat our enemy wherever he chooses to strike.

Part of being prepared is to properly inspect and maintain your equipment. Complacency and carelessness can be just as deadly as the enemy. Any injury or loss of life, which could have been avoided by simply following proper procedures and doing the right thing, is unacceptable.

Non-commissioned officers, it is up to you to enforce the standards, and teach your Soldiers right from wrong, especially in regards to safety and responsibility. The privates of this fight will be the NCOs of the next fight and it is up to you, our enlisted leaders, to set the example and place them on the path towards success.

Do not take anything for granted, and use your time wisely to continue to train.

Remember:

BE SAFE...

BE SMART...

And when required... BE LETHAL!

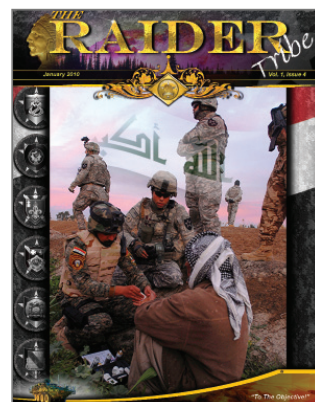


Raider 7

Col. John Norris
4-2 SBCT Commander
Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Huggins
4-2 SBCT Command Sergeant Major
Capt. Christopher Ophardt
Public Affairs Officer
Sgt. Bryce Dubee
Public Affairs NCOIC
Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
Layout editor/photojournalist
Spc. Luisito Brooks
Photojournalist
Pfc. Mitchell Fosman
Broadcaster
Danny Martin
Media Facilitator
Damon Godinet
Graphic Artist

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Any story or photo submissions should be forwarded to Sgt. Dubee at bryce.dubee@4bct2id.army.mil
Any questions regarding public affairs should be forwarded to Capt. Ophardt at christopher.ophardt@4bct2id.army.mil



On the cover:
Photo by Spc. Luisito Brooks, 4th SBCT PAO,
2nd Inf. Div.
Graphics and cover design by Damon Godinet





Photo by Spc. Luisito Brooks, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Iraqi Army officials, local tribal leaders and leaders from 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, conduct a ribbon cutting ceremony for a new solar-powered courthouse in Abu Ghraib Jan. 18.

Power to Abu Ghraib people, courthouse

**Story by Spc. Luisito Brooks
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.**

ABU GHRAIB, Iraq - A courthouse should be a place where the law is upheld and enforced at all times, but with only a few hours of electricity to last the entire work day, the judicial system in Iraq has been rather limited.

Local and Iraqi Army leaders joined U.S. Army officials from 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, Jan. 25 to pass judgment on the issue when they cut the ribbon for a new solar powered battery system at the Abu Ghraib Supreme Court Justice Center Courthouse.

With power conservation being a major challenge for the area, officials say the solar-powered courthouse won't be restricted to the limits of the

national power grid.

"The use of electricity in this area is very frugal," said Capt. Cynthia Ling, a San Sebastian, Puerto Rico native and project purchasing officer for the Raider Brigade. "Now that the building is using solar energy, the courthouse's hours of operation will be extended, which will provide help for the people with legal issues."

This project, identified by courthouse officials, took more than six months and \$372,900 to finish, completed by Iraqi contractors who employed 60 local workers.

"Everyone working together [creates] better results," said the Qada Chairman Kamal Abbas Thahi. "The solar power project will cover the services for the people of Abu Ghraib."

The added electricity also powers lighting at night, improving security for the building and the surrounding area.

In addition to the solar panels, other improvements to courthouse facilities were made.

"We are helping this community with a vital resource," said Ling. "Part of this project was also to provide supplies, such as copy machines and the completion of a driveway that would lead up to the courthouse."

The ribbon cutting was a mark for the beginning of the solar-powered courthouse but also a symbol for renewed partnership, said Iraqi leaders.

See COURTHOUSE, page 19

Cav Soldiers meet Tarmiyah Council

Story by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

JOINT SECURITY STATION TARMIAH, Iraq – As Iraqi townspeople debated with raised voices in a building in Tarmiyah, Jan. 11, the commander of Troop A, 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, sat in the back of the room and listened intently as his interpreter translated the concerns of the local populace.

This was the first time Capt. David Culver had attended a Tarmiyah council meeting since his unit began supporting Iraqi Security Forces in the qada.

Troop A recently replaced outgoing elements of 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, who are redeploying stateside.

“We’re there to answer any security questions they might have as well as keep tabs on what other problems are affecting the population,” said Culver.

The meeting helped him get a better idea of local issues in the area and prepared him to assist his Iraqi counterparts in making Tarmiyah a safer place.

One thing Culver said was very encouraging to see was the input from the attendees at the meeting.

“There was an issue, there was some conflict over the issue, and they came to a consensus and eventually moved forward,” he said.

Communication wasn’t always good in the meetings, said Capt. Ray Canzonier, commander of Company B, 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt. Canzonier’s company secured Tarmiyah before Troop A arrived.

“I’ve seen an increased participation (from council members),” said Canzonier.

The council members discussed items such as a neighborhood watch program, area construction projects and street cleanliness.

Culver took all of these issues into consideration.

However, the biggest benefit the commander took away from the meeting was an introduction to the local people.

“As a new commander here, knowing the influential people who walk into town is important,” he said.

Being able to talk face-to-face with several of the council members, both before and after the meeting, Culver said he left the meeting feeling welcome in the neighborhood.

“Everyone seemed very encouraged to work with me,” said Culver; “just as I’m encouraged and excited to work with them.”



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Capt. David Culver (right), the commander of Troop A, 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, listens to issues being discussed at a town council meeting in Tarmiyah, Jan. 11.



VIPs visit



Photo by Sgt. Bryce S. Dubee, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Photo by Sgt. Bryce S. Dubee, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – (Above) Vice President of the United States, Joe Biden, visits Soldiers at the Raider Inn Dining Facility here, Jan. 23. **(Below)** Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby, the deputy commanding general for operations and I Corps commanding general, U.S. Forces-Iraq, talks to Soldiers eating dinner at the Raider Inn Dining Facility here, Jan. 23.



Photo by Sgt. Bryce S. Dubee, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Raiders



Photo courtesy of Joe Barrentine/ Tacoma News Tribune

(Above) ABU GHRAIB, Iraq – Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Mike Mullins, walks in the markets here while visiting the Raider Brigade.
JOINT SECURITY STATION NASIR WA SALAM, Iraq – (Bottom left) Gen. Ray Odierno, U.S. Forces- Iraq commanding general, reenlists a group of Soldiers here. (Bottom right) Col. John Norris, commander, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, greets Gen. Ray Odierno during a visit here.



Photo by U.S. Army

Photo by U.S. Army





MANCHU 7

Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Leirdahl
4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment CSM



Manchus, friends and families,

December was a phenomenal month for the Manchu Battalion.

The Christmas season was a time to reflect on what we have in our lives and those who are most dear to us.

We all love and miss our wives, children, mothers, fathers, and friends.

We also truly appreciate the needed love and support we get from everyone back home.

This past month, we enjoyed some special events on our two joint security stations.

We had a basketball tournament, comedians brought in by the USO, Christmas celebrations, and we welcomed the New Year. All the while, we continued to assist our Iraqi allies, the 24th Iraqi Army Brigade.

Despite the festivities, we both resiliently maintained our daily mission, to protect the people of this part of Iraq.

During the visit from the comedians, a few of our Manchu brothers found out a little more about themselves than they wanted to. These comedians were amusing, entertaining and strangely educational. We learned what not to do in showers and how pointed questions can be a little misleading. They conducted skits mocking Armed Forces Network commercials and addressed our "rough" life

here in Iraq.

While it is not easy being away from family, particularly during Christmas, laughing and sharing stories (some very exaggerated) with your Manchu brothers is a worthy substitute.

The basketball tournament was a big hit with the Soldiers. We have some great athletes among the Manchus and our brother battalions that joined us.

The headquarters team, shining under some incredible leadership, played outstanding ball.

They dazzled everyone with their skill, but sadly didn't fair that well—though not for a lack of trying.

The winners were obviously NBA-caliber recruits from 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment.

The I Corps rock band came out to

"We also truly appreciate the needed love and support we get from everyone back home."

-Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Leirdahl

JSS Nasir Wa Salam and Aqur Quf.

They were entertaining and played some skilled, but very loud, music right behind my office window.

We held to the Manchu motto with a bonfire, aiming to "Keep up the Fire".

Soldiers gathered around and enjoyed the evening with the first live music we had heard since leaving Fort Lewis, Wash.

We remain focused on the mission



and are preoccupied with rehearsals and continual improvement of our unit.

That being said, thoughts of family are always with us. We not only wonder how they are doing but also wishing we could be there for them.

Soldiers on their second, third and fourth deployments are especially remarkable. The sacrifices they have made will never be forgotten or fully understood. The profession of arms is a great and noble one that includes great sacrifice by the few, for the many.

I am proud to serve alongside these dedicated and selfless Soldiers of the Manchu Battalion.

**Manchu 7
"Keep Up the Fire."**

Manchu Soldiers hit the links

Story by Spc. Luisito Brooks
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

JOINT SECURITY STATION AQUR QUF, Iraq – Some would call having a shipping container full of golf balls and only two clubs ironic, but that's exactly the situation Soldiers from the Company A, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment "Manchus," found themselves in.

It was only through the help of two embedded reporters, and the generosity of organizations and families from the Fort Lewis, Wash., area that they were able to address the matter and properly adjust their swing.

"We read the article in the Tacoma News Tribune, by Scott Fontaine, about our brave Soldiers of Able Company, 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Reg.,"

John Thompson, a military supporter from Fox Island, Wash., wrote in a letter sent to the unit. "We understand that they could use some golf clubs for the 50,000 golf balls they found."

Thompson and other readers who saw the article reached out to 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, for help, donating several sets of clubs to



Photo by Spc. Luisito Brooks, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Soldiers from Company A, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division took the opportunity to share with their Iraqi Army partners a few tips, along with the new golf clubs that were sent to them from the Fort Lewis, Wash. area on Jan. 9, here.

the unit.

Many Soldiers had no idea that a news article had been written about their particular situation, so when the golf clubs arrived, they were surprised.

"Wow, these clubs are really nice," said Spc. Miguel Franchini, a Company B, 702nd Brigade Support

Battalion, 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, mechanic assigned to the Manchus from San Diego. "We really are thankful for all the support."

For the Soldiers who play golf on this small secluded joint security station, the

clubs gave them something to look forward to at the end of a busy day here.

"[On] the days when we just get so busy and we are working 14 to 18 hours or more a day, it's good to get away just for a few moments and take our minds off work and hit a few golf balls," said Spc. Hardin Andrew, a native of Ontario, Ore. from Company B, 702nd BSB. "Hitting a couple of golf balls really helps me relax, especially when things get a little stressful."

The Soldiers have built a small area on a rooftop to hit the golf balls; something some of the Soldiers would love to build back stateside.

"I wish I could hit golf balls off the roof of my house back at home," said Capt. Keith Roberts, the company commander of Company A, 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Reg., 4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div., from Dupont, Wash. "That would be

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Photo by Spc. Luisito Brooks, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

After receiving golf clubs donated from the Fort Lewis, Wash. area, Soldiers from Company A, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division take a short break to try them out on a couple golf balls here, Jan. 9.

U.S. vice president visits 4-2 SBCT

Story by Sgt. Bryce S. Dubee
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Vice President of the United States Joe Biden met with members of 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, “Raiders” and other deployed service members and civilians Saturday as part of his visit this week to Iraq.

Taking time out of his busy schedule of meeting with Iraqi government officials and U.S. military leaders, Biden made a stop at the Raider Inn Dining Facility during dinner to chat with troops and pose for photos.

Biden was swarmed by service members and civilians eager to meet him as he was escorted through the bustling facility by Col. John Norris, the 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. commander.

Expressing his appreciation for the hard work done by Soldiers, the vice president worked through the crowd, shaking hands with the troops and often pausing to hear from many of the Soldiers.

Biden said he hopes the American people understand the amount of hard work done by service members while deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. He is the father of a Soldier.

“You go out and saddle up every day,” he said, during a conversation with members of the 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., command staff and Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby, deputy commanding general for operations and I Corps commanding general, U.S. Forces-Iraq.

The vice president said that even in the face of great adversity, such as the loss of a fellow Soldier, service members still “saddle back up” and head out the next day.

Norris expressed his appreciation for Biden’s visit of the brigade and for his strong support of his troops in the past.

“I thanked him for going to Fort Lewis for the [5th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div.] ceremony,” he said.

The Stryker brigade’s sister unit, 5th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., has taken heavy losses during its deployment to Afghanistan and in November 2009, the vice president travelled to Fort Lewis, Wash., for a ceremony memorializing seven brigade Soldiers killed by a roadside bomb.

Norris reminded Biden about that visit. “It’s really important to all of us that somebody of your stature recognizes those troops that have fallen.”



Photo by Sgt. Bryce S. Dubee, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Vice President Joe Biden takes a moment to speak with Lt. Col. Darron Wright, deputy commanding officer, and Maj. William Voorhies, executive officer, both with the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, while visiting troops in Iraq.

...NORRIS from page 2

conditions for irreversible momentum. The Raider brigade and the Iraqi 6th and 9th divisions that we are partnered with, represent Iraq and the United States decisive effort--we secure Iraq’s center of gravity. There is no greater responsibility-

no greater privilege than to serve and protect the capitol city during this strategically critical period--years of American investment and human treasure comes down to this very moment--let history reflect the noble service, sacrifice and contributions of our Raiders.

I thank each member of the Raider Tribe for their hard work and dedication to the mission. Keep up the good work.

Raider 6
“To the Objective!”



CRAZYHORSE 6

Captain Christopher A. Connor

Company C, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment Commander



Tomahawk Soldiers, families, and friends,

Crazyhorse Company joined the Tomahawk Battalion at Camp Taji on New Year's Day after three months working in the Amanant and living at Camp Justice.

While in Baghdad, the men of Co. C, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment partnered with each battalion of 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and worked with elements of the 6th Brigade, 2nd Division Federal Police in Khadamiya.

We learned numerous invaluable lessons about partnership and the rapid growth in competency and proficiency of the Iraqi Security Forces since 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division's service during the Surge.

The Soldiers of Co. C's executed numerous joint operations within the Amanant to support 22nd Bde., 6th IA Div.'s aggressive presence within Baghdad.

Additionally, we conducted joint training with each IA battalion including an intensive certification course for the 22nd Bde., 6th IA Div.'s Mortar Company administered by our Fire Support Team noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Staff Sgt. Hale.

The culminating event for the training was observation by the leadership of the mortar company of our company mortar section executing crew drills for an illumination call-for-fire mission in support of Operation Tom-

ahawk Thrust.

The overall experience for our Soldiers during our initial three months of the deployment was positive and we ended our time in the Amanant with a successful relief-in-place with the 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment "Vikings."

Our company was excited to rejoin the remainder of the Tomahawk Battalion and begin work to support Operation Tomahawk Pursuit following Operational Environment Expansion.

During our RIP with 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, we met our new IA partners, 2nd Brigade, 37th IA Div.

Following the initial meeting with sCol. Kamel, his staff, and his company commanders we understood that our new Iraqi partners were a competent and determined group leaning forward to support the population within their area of operations, and most notably the upcoming March Iraqi National Elections. Kamel is an aggressive commander who has the confidence and trust of both the people and sheikhs of northwestern Taji and the government leaders of the area.

We have attended numerous meetings over the past month in which his advice and counsel has been requested by all groups covering a wide-range of topics from local economic projects to security and preparations for the national elections.



Kamel's presence at the northwestern Taji Sheikh Support council meeting has been pivotal in shaping the security posture for the elections and reinforcing the ISF's commitment to fostering a safe and secure environment for the historic event in March.

The new OE posed many new challenges for our Soldiers, but none that they were unable to meet and overcome.

The canal systems of Northern Taji made for quite a challenge for our drivers after working in Baghdad, but they quickly adapted to the terrain and are now comfortable moving our Strykers during both day and night operations. The open, rural areas support joint dismounted patrols with 2nd Bde., 37th IA Div. while using our Strykers and its weapon

See **TOMAHAWKS**, page 31



Photo by Spc. Luisito Brooks, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Story by Spc. Luisito Brooks
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

TAJI, Iraq – As scavenger birds circled their position near a small community southeast of Taji, Soldiers from 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division navigated seemingly endless hills of trash, searching for materials that could be used to make improvised explosive devices.

“The insurgents like to use these less fortunate areas to hide and make IEDs,” said Sgt. 1st Class Eric Richardson, the 1st Platoon, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment platoon sergeant. “By attacking these insurgents at their starting point, we could

prevent attacks that could threaten the surrounding areas.”

The Soldiers met with a few of the local leaders in this small community to develop a good relationship and let them know they would be searching through the area to provide security for their people.

“The people seemed very accommodating and they let us do our job,” said Spc. Robert James, a infantryman with 1st Plt., Co. B, 2nd Bn., 23rd Inf. Regt. “As we walked through, the children watched us for a while then they started playing soccer.”

The area had many terrain issues for the Tomahawks to overcome in order to accomplish the mission.

“My guys looked through the vil-

lage and searched through knee deep trash,” said Staff Sgt. Baharri Weston, a 1st Plt., Co. B, 2nd Bn., 23rd Inf. Regt. squad leader. “The search even took everyone of us through a field of wild bamboo, which was very challenging to navigate.”

As the sun set over the pile of trash and the end of the mission drew near, Soldiers said the people’s security brought the most reward for them.

“The threat of having insurgents near these guys’ families was something the people in this village took very seriously,” said Richardson. “I see that we are affecting this area with a positive message and it is really getting through.”

Football legends face-off against deployed Soldiers

Story by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Veteran football players and coaches played a flag football game with Soldiers here, Jan. 1, to celebrate the New Year. The celebrities were in for more than that while they visited the deployed environment.

“It was more about being able to come over here and experience Iraq and the troops and get into their lives a little bit what they’re going through,” said Ty Detmer, former quarterback for the Philadelphia Eagles and starter for the Detroit Lions.

Detmer, a resident of Austin, Texas, said there are aspects of a deployed Soldier’s life that most people are unable to see because they are not over here.

One such aspect is the threat of enemy forces.

Though attacks have died down in the area, Barry Switzer heard insurgent attacks firsthand when things got fired up here, the night of New Years Eve.

“Everyone seems to appreciate the fact that we’re spending time away from our families during the holiday season to be here with the troops,” said Switzer. “Except the insurgents who dropped seven rockets on us last night.”

No one was harmed, but the football veterans began to realize the reality of situation in Iraq and how hard it is being away from family.

They willingly travelled far away from home and spent a few days in the lives of Soldiers living here.

Switzer said he jumped at the chance to coach a team for the New Years game when he was asked by Tostitos and



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Tony Casillas wrestles with a player on the opposing team during a New Year's Day flag football game at Liberty Field here, Jan. 1.

the USO.

“Football is a common denominator for all Americans,” said Switzer.

Switzer, whose team won the game at Liberty Field here, expressed sincere gratitude towards Soldiers in his acceptance speech and said his team would be back next year to win again.



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Rocket Ismail prepares to catch a football during a flag football game at Liberty Field here, Jan. 1.



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Players on Team Freedom huddle before a New Year's Day flag football game at Liberty Field here, Jan. 1.



ROCK 6

Lt. Col. John Leffers

1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment Commander



Rock Soldiers, families, and friends,

I want to wish all of the Warriors of the Rock a Happy New Year!

The Rock of the Marne ended the year on a very positive note and look forward to a challenging and prosperous new year.

All of our actions are focused on assisting the Government of Iraq and its security forces make Iraq a safe and secure country as the citizens of Iraq prepare for the upcoming national elections in March.

Our companies continue to strengthen their partnerships with their Iraqi Army and Police counterparts and have even taken on additional partnerships as our operating environment recently increased.

We also remain committed to developing new civil capacity projects to help the citizens of Iraq improve their quality of life.

Attack Company remains busy with an expanded operating environment. They gained an additional Iraqi Army

They continue to integrate themselves into the local government council meetings with a focus to increase civil capacity (water, sewage, electricity) in conjunction with Iraqi Security Forces and local government.

Chaos Company's operating environment did not significantly change; however, they did see additional partnerships.

They now have oversight of the joint coordination center (JCC) in Abu Ghraib, partnering with the Iraqi Police to increase their skills and knowledge for a more competent

and legitimate security force.

Hunter Company finished the year strong.

Staff and supporting elements worked dili-

gently to plan for the operating environment expansion. They continue to lean forward to set the conditions for a successful election period.

In closing, I again want to wish everyone a Happy New Year! Thank you for your continued support of all the Rock Soldiers and their families.

"We also remain committed to developing new civil capacity projects to help the citizens of Iraq improve their quality of life."

-Lt. Col. John Leffers

Partnership that has been very receptive to share knowledge and experience from our Soldiers.

Attack Company has also been diligently working with the Iraqi Police to maintain security for the populace in preparation for the upcoming elections.

Bayonet Company gained the majority of the expanded operating environment. They have also received an additional Iraqi Army company partnership.



Rock 6
"Rock of the Marne!"

Bayonet Company conducts partnership training

**Story by 1st Lt. Matt Buchanan
B Co., 1st Bn., 38th Inf. Regt.**

JOINT SECURITY STATION

MUTHANA, Iraq – As members of an highly-trained fighting force, the Strike Team, the Karkh Area Command's elite direct-action force, are always seeking to improve themselves and to train new recruits to join their elite unit.

Since Dec. 2009, 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment has been closely partnered with the Strike Team, advising and providing enabler support for training and operations.

"It's different from what we're used to doing as infantrymen, but it's the most important part of the U.S. effort in Iraq right now," said Staff Sgt. Evan Grusofski of Pittsburgh.

The Strike Team lives and trains at the KAC headquarters compound on JSS Muthana in Baghdad.

The team began with an initial pool of 70 Iraqi Army Soldiers, many of whom have been fighting the insurgency since 2003, trained by U.S. Special Operations Forces in advanced techniques for Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT).

From this solid foundation, the



Photo courtesy of 1st Lt. Matt Buchanan, 1st Bn., 38th Inf. Regt.

First Lt. Matt Buchanan of Honolulu, Hawaii counts Strike Team Soldiers onto a UH-60 helicopter during air assault rehearsals.

Strike Team took over training potential new members.

The best and brightest from the team were picked to be instructors, and with the help of 2nd Platoon, they developed a 5-week selection and assessment course designed to indoctrinate their prospective new members.

Many of the new students didn't arrive with the same wealth of knowledge and experience as their predecessors.

"They were a little rough at first," remarked Sgt. Christopher McNear of San Bernardino, Calif. on graduation day—but the professionalism of the instructors and high operational tempo quickly brought them up to speed.

At the end of the training, the Strike Team put their latest recruits' skills to the test, conducting a raid in a western Baghdad

neighborhood with 2nd Platoon in support.

"It was the first time we had been in the true advisory role in an operational environment, so it was hard for me to sit back and advise the Iraqi Squad Leaders," said Staff Sgt. Keith Cabanas of Mililani, Hawaii. "My instinct was to be the Squad Leader, but the Strike Team leadership is strong enough."

The Strike Team is eager to learn from their advisors, but 2nd Platoon is benefiting from the Strike Team instructors' wealth of knowledge and experience as well. While giving the students a water break on the Close Quarters Marksmanship range, Strike Team instructors gave the advisor team a class on advanced pistol marksmanship.

"The learning goes both ways with



Photo courtesy of 1st Lt. Matt Buchanan, 1st Bn., 38th Inf. Regt.

Strike Team recruits receive a block of instruction on close quarters marksmanship from Iraqi Army Sgt. Omar and Sgt. Ahmed.

See BAYONET, page 19

these guys,” explained Sgt. Jason Taylor of Hamlet, Ind. “Because of all the diverse training they’ve received over the years, the instructors’ kit bags are huge.”

By training together every day and conducting several combined operations since then, the Strike Team and their 2nd Platoon advisors have grown into a very close-knit team.

“I’d have no problem going directly into a live-fire with these guys, with only one or two dry-run rehearsals—I trust them and their abilities that much,” said Sgt. 1st Class Joe Huffman of Batesburg, S.C.

And even though they are only required to train, plan, and execute missions together, the Strike Team and their American advisors can often be seen eating, working out, and having fun together in-between training and missions.



Photo courtesy of 1st Lt. Matt Buchanan, 1st Bn., 38th Inf. Regt.
Soldiers from 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division demonstrate to members of the Karkh Area Command Strike Team the proper way to load a UH-60 helicopter during rehearsals for an air assault mission.

“I’m going to miss my American friends when they go home,” said Sgt. Saif Anan, the Strike Team’s Head Instructor, “I hope one day, we can visit each other just to hang out.”

With Iraq’s security in the capable hands of Soldiers like Anan and the rest of the KAC Strike Team, the 2nd Platoon Soldiers think that day might not be too far off.

...**COURTHOUSE** from page 4

Ghraib, who coordinated continuously with Mr. Kamal Abbas to help succeed the project of solar power,” said Shaykh Husayn Khames al-Tamimi, the tribal council leader for Abu Ghraib.

With the cleaner, safer and renewable power source in place, U.S. leaders say judges will no longer be blinded by power outages but will now be able to serve all Abu Ghraib Iraqis equitably.

“This is a great benefit to the people of Iraq,” said Col. John Norris, the 4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div. Commander. “I am proud to see that we came together on this project because this will allow the government to provide full support to these citizens.”



Photo by Maj. Kevin James, HHC, 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div.
Iraqi and U.S. officials cut the ribbon on new solar panels at Abu Ghraib Courthouse Jan. 18, which will provide clean, efficient energy and extend operating hours.



BLACKHAWK 6

Lt. Col. Richard Heyward

2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment Commander



Troopers, families, and friends of the Blackhawks,

Greetings from Camp Taji!

The last month has certainly been busy for the Blackhawk Squadron.

We moved the entire unit from Camp Striker, established operations at Taji, and assumed control over a new part of Iraq.

We are now poised to begin operations in Tarmiyah to ensure the national elections in March occur in a safe and secure environment.

The move up north from Camp Striker went exceptionally well and was a tremendous team effort. The Blackhawk Troopers demonstrated their professionalism and flexibility throughout the entire process.

The Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Platoon and Logistics Support Team executed 10 round-trip patrols moving essential equipment to Taji, allowing the unit to rapidly establish the squadron and troop command posts at our new location.

In the end, we arrived at Taji ahead of schedule and began the final preparations to transition into Tarmiyah.

The early arrival at Taji gave us an opportunity to reflect on the lessons we learned in Zaidon and refine our combat skills before transitioning Tarmiyah from 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

The troops conducted numerous

ranges, refined their patrolling techniques, and honed their first aid skills.

The squadron's command teams also took the opportunity to link up with our counterparts in 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt. and become familiar with the terrain and influential leaders within Tarmiyah.

We also continued limited operations with Cobra and Bandog Troops assisting 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment security efforts along the Corps main supply route and helped prevent the enemy from emplacing improvised explosive devices against our supply convoys.

As the Blackhawks transitioned Tarmiyah from 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt., we laid the groundwork for success in the same manner as we did in Zaidon; through Iraqi Security Force partnerships, civil projects to improve Iraqi quality of life, and meeting with local leaders to encourage Iraqi solutions to Iraqi problems.

The squadron's command teams immediately engaged our new Iraqi partners of the 36th Brigade, 9th Division and found them very willing to work together to ensure Tarmiyah's security.

This Iraqi unit has a very professional reputation and we look forward to future operations with the 36th Bde. as well as the Iraqi Police within the Tarmiyah area.

Command Sgt. Maj. Griffin and I are impressed every day by the professionalism and dedication displayed by every Blackhawk Trooper.



You set the standard in everything you do and the command sergeant major and I know that your sense of purpose will ensure the squadron's success in Tarmiyah.

We also deeply appreciate our families and friends back home who kept us stocked with baked goods and gifts during the holiday season.

Though we could not spend the holidays with our families, I am glad that we had the opportunity to take some time off and celebrate with each other.

Command Sgt. Maj. Griffin and I want to wish you all the best for 2010 and we know you will excel in Tarmiyah as you did in Zaidon.

Blackhawk 6
"Out Front, Blackhawks!"

Army unit partnership soars on Taji flight line

**Story by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.**

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – A sea of unit patches hovered around a Shadow unmanned aerial system, readying it for flight.

“LAUNCH! LAUNCH!

LAUNCH!” barked a Soldier on a headset.

A button was pushed and the UAS took off from its launcher in a blur.

Behind all the action were Soldiers from several different units who had come together here to make the mission in Iraq a success with shared workloads and equipment, responsibilities, and experience.

“The ‘one team, one fight’ concept really takes place here,” said Sgt. Carlos Salamanca, the maintenance noncommissioned officer-in-charge and shift leader for 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mountain Division and native of San Antonio. “I don’t know many other places where this takes place.”

Salamanca works with Sgt. Michael Heimdale, a crew chief with Troop D, 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. Heimdale recently arrived at his unit and said he felt welcomed into the combined force, made up of mostly sergeants and above.

“We respect rank but work together as equals,” said Heimdale, a Cushing, Okla., native.

Both sergeants agree that with all the units combined, the workload isn’t as hard on the Soldiers and allows them more personal time to recover from a work day.

Another benefit of sharing a work space is the consolidated assets like the Shadow, they said. Sharing equipment allows the units to replace parts if needed to support the mission.



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Sgt. Carlos Salamanca (right), the maintenance noncommissioned officer-in-charge and shift leader for 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mountain Division, and native of San Antonio, goes over flight procedures for a Shadow unmanned aerial system with Sgt. Michael Heimdale, a crew chief with D Troop, 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, and native of Cushing, Okla., Jan. 15. Salamanca mentors Heimdale, who recently arrived at his unit, just as other Soldiers in their units work together on a daily basis.

Each unit takes care of its equipment, but all units share responsibility for upkeep on the site, explained Salamanca.

The NCOs in charge at the site verify that all standards, such as cleanliness of the workspace and maintenance of equipment, are the same for all the units. The units combined the standards sometime ago in order to keep them the same; considered necessary for learning in a combined environment.

Salamanca, who has been working with UASs since 2004, said every time he deploys overseas, he learns new things from different people.

“We share experiences, which help the learning process for new Soldiers,” said Salamanca;

It’s these common experiences that promote common purpose, according to Heimdale. “We all wear the same uniform. It’s all about unit cohesion; we’re all the same Army.”

Iraqis lead as new units step up

**Story by Capt. David Franklin
2nd Sqdn., 1st Cav. Regt. UPAR**

TAJI, Iraq – In the hours just before dawn, Soldiers from 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Regiment, are met by an Iraqi officer who immediately approached while pointing at the nearest U.S. vehicle.

Using a simple gesture and stating one Arabic word, “Mutarjim,” meaning interpreter, the Iraqi officer wants to

know if the U.S. forces have brought one and if they are ready to begin the mission.

time out.”

However, what some of the Iraqi Soldiers lacked in experience, they

“They (5th Iraqi Tank Battalion) have good leadership.”

*-1st Lt. Erich Roush
platoon leader,
C Troop, 2nd Sqdn., 1st Cav. Regt.*

made up for in motivation, eagerly taking the lead ahead of their American counterparts, who remained a short distance behind in a supporting role during the mission.

The Iraqi Soldiers conducted searches

The interpreter is critical for the Iraqi officer, from the 5th Iraqi Tank

Battalion to communicate with his counterpart to 1st Lt. Erich Roush, a native of Milwaukee, who is a platoon leader in C Troop and assigned to the mission of conducting a combined search for weapons in a small area along the Tigris River.

This is the first time Roush and his platoon have worked with the 5th Iraqi Tank Bn. on a mission with large numbers of Iraqi Soldiers, many of whom it was their first time executing a combat patrol.

“They’re really raw” said Roush “It was their first

of homes in the area, and as the patrol progressed, it became apparent that the Iraqis were executing the mission as planned.

“They maintained good organization” said Roush, “They have good leadership”.

That’s not to say that mistakes weren’t made.

After searching the home of one local man, the Iraqi Soldiers continued down the road to search another gate, only to find the same owner as before; that gate was simply part of the same property.

But this didn’t hinder their efforts by any means and they continued on to the next home where they were welcomed with food and chai tea; hospitality normally enjoyed by American Soldiers. Shortly thereafter, both sides completed their mission and began to head back to where they started the morning, the Iraqis again in the lead.

While no weapons were found this time, the Iraqi Soldiers remained enthusiastic and completed the mission with a sense of confidence.

“We’ve got to let them lead from the front” said Roush.



Photo by Capt. David Franklin, 2nd Sqdn., 1st Cav. Regt. UPAR

Pfc. Joseph S. Switzer, with 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division operates a radio during combined mission with Iraqi Soldiers from the 5th Iraqi Tank Battalion.



VIKINGS

1st Lt. Aaron Harris

Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment



Viking Soldiers, families, and friends,

The Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division are currently executing two completely different missions in the Northwest Baghdad region.

With a reduced need of fire support in today's counter-insurgency operations, artillerymen are often required to carry out the infantry mission.

Today, 2nd Bn., 12th FAR is executing both mission sets.

Barbarian Battery is a microcosm of a field artillery battalion.

A two-platoon line battery, the Barbarians have one platoon manning hot-guns at Camp Taji – M777 “triple seven” artillery pieces, while the other platoon conducts mounted and dismounted patrols in the streets of Northwest Baghdad.

Both platoons play their own integral role in completing the mission here in Iraq.

When Btry. B arrived in Iraq in September 2009, they expected to be conducting patrols while their M777 howitzers gathered dust in the motor pool.

Last deployment, at the height of the surge in 2007, 2nd Bn., 12th FAR did just that.

Although they brought their howitzers forward to theatre, the artillerymen quickly became experts at mounted and dismounted fighting while clearing the streets of insurgents and

improvised explosives.

For the first several months of the battalion's current deployment, both platoons of Btry. B took to the street in Baghdad's Mansour District, working directly with an Iraqi Army battalion.

These ‘redlegs’ were strangely comfortable in their maneuver mission set until they received word of a change.

In late December, Btry. B was given the mission to provide indirect fire support at Camp Taji when United States Division - Central needed a hot-gun to replace an outgoing artillery battery.

All of a sudden, the Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Btry. B found themselves moving to Camp Taji to prepare to provide artillery support to other units in the division area of operations.

Meanwhile, 1st Platoon, Btry. B continued to patrol on the streets, even as the battalion area of operations was undergoing a vast expansion.

Btry. B found itself split between different locations with two completely different mission sets to tackle, and a large AO to patrol.

Meanwhile, the battalion was now split between five different locations, and an AO that was once the size of more than two brigades.

“The Barbarians have mastered the mounted and dismounted patrol, joint operations and intelligence development,” said former Barbarian Commander, Nicholas Dvonch.



“We can operate independently, or as part of a combined arms unit. Our mission is to deploy, fight and win, and that is all we have to know; we'll figure the rest out.”

The battalion is prepared to execute any mission assigned, in any area of operation. They are capable of supporting both organic and adjacent maneuver units with accurate and predicted artillery fires.

Though much smaller than the infantry battalions in the brigade, 2nd Bn., 12th FAR is able to keep up with the best.

Artillerymen must master two combat skill sets, and that is what makes them unique.

1st Lt. Harris
“Vikings!”



FORGE

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jeff Wargo
Company B, 702nd Brigade Support Battalion



Forge Soldiers, families, and friends,

Company B, 702nd BSB supports the entire Raider Brigade with maintenance of vehicles, weapons, generators, night vision devices and radios. Many people do not know about the forward elements that are working with the infantry, artillery and cavalry conducting maintenance out at forward operating bases and joint security stations. These elements are called combat repair teams.

Co. B. has five CRTs to support each battalion in both garrison and combat. These CRTs are made up of a warrant officer, motor sergeant and about 30 Soldiers. It is comprised of several sections including an Armament Section that maintains all the weapons for the supported battalion, an Electronics & Missile Section that services and repairs NVD and a Standard Army Maintenance System-Enhanced Section that dispatches vehicles, and ordering, turning in and receiving parts for the battalion.

CRT-4 supports 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment at Camp Taji, Iraq.

Their day begins in the early hours with physical training, a small breakfast at the dining facility and an 8 a.m. work call. The NCOs day begins receiving the daily operations order from the motor sergeant (commonly referred to as "Motor Daddy"). Staff Sgt. Parcels puts out to the group the priorities of work for the day are and any upcoming events. The mission vary from conducting repairs on a Stryker or humvee to going out on a logistics package to drop off parts to the fellow mechanics at the JSS the unit occupies. Throughout the day these mechanics are conducting quality assurance and quality checks on equipment from the squadron.

The CRT has specialty military occupational skills such as generator mechanics and air conditioner mechanics, and basic wheeled vehicle mechanics and recovery section, all of which are constantly training, teaching, or working. Spc. Martinez, a generator mechanic in CRT-4, works on generators or cross trains on different

vehicles to support his fellow mechanics Spc. Grimm, the air conditioning mechanic, and doubles as the hazardous material NCO. When he is not working on generators or A/C systems, he is inspecting, conducting inventory, and ordering to ensure HAZMAT it is stored properly and that there is enough on hand so we can continue to maintain the squadron with coolant and oils.

Our Armament Section, led by Sgt. Berry, conducts technical inspections on Remote Weapons Systems on the Strykers and conducts repairs and technical inspections on weapons. His team is constantly on the move either in the shop, at a troop's arms room, or out supporting at a JSS.

For jobs that cannot be repaired by the CRT, Spc. Green creates work orders and sends them to the base EMS for repairs. He is constantly running back and forth from Taji to VBC or conducting NVD services.

The heart of the operation is the SAMS-E. This is run by Spc. Vails and his team of three Soldiers. They start the day with Spc. Monson and Spc. Mariano sending out reports to the Maintenance Control Section SAMS-2E system about our maintenance status while Spc. Pierce runs to the Supply Support Activity to pick up parts.

The 'Motor Daddy' and chief work hand in hand. Chief handles the technical aspects of the job and attends the squadron meetings to provide recommendations on motor pool operations, tracks maintenance and sends reports to squadron HQ. The 'Motor Daddy' acts as a motor sergeant and a platoon sergeant with his chief acting almost as a platoon leader.

Their outstanding support helps keep the Raider Brigade on the path "To the Objective".

CW2 Wargo
"FORGE!"

UNDERTAKER 6

Capt. Steven Phipps

Military Intelligence Company Commander



Blackhawk and Undertaker family and friends,

The MICO would like to welcome you to the New Year and we hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday season.

We had a little down time of our own.

The MICO welcomed in the New Year with a Company Barbeque.

We weren't able to bring everyone back to participate but those who did had a great meal, a chance to step away from work, enjoy some conversation, and watch some movies together.

First Sergeant planned a great event. We also discovered that he is pretty good behind the grill. Thanks First Sergeant, the Soldiers really enjoyed the event.

The work load for 1st and 2nd platoon has seen a dramatic increase.

As most of you know, the brigade's battle space almost double in the last month as the Army continues its withdrawal from Iraq.

This has caused some reshuffling of tasks and personnel to ensure that we continue to provide the best support available to the brigade.

The Analysis and Control Element has aligned itself to provide detailed analysis to the battalions to support the Soldiers on the ground as well as to provide an in-depth overall picture to the brigade commander to assist him in making the best decisions for the brigade.

The products that the Soldiers are

producing are simply amazing.

Spc. Jonny Lyons has developed a product that has become the standard for the ACE and we are assisting battalions to develop similar products.

These products are built so that we can share them with our Iraqi partners and help them remove terrorists and insurgents from Iraq.

This increase has also caused the MICO to change how 3rd platoon is conducting operations.

We have moved Soldiers from Taji back to join us here at Liberty and a couple from the brigade's joint operating centers to Camp Taji. This change has allowed us to create more Human Intelligence Collect Teams.

This overall change in operations will assist 3rd platoon in gathering the important information that the battalions and the ACE need to continue to develop the enemy situation.

Trust me, even though their locations may have changed, 1st Lt. Kim and Staff Sgt. Wiese are hard at work to ensure that they are well taken care of and have the equipment and necessities to live comfortably and complete the mission.

As we moved into the New Year we continued the R & R leave cycle.

We had our first Soldiers take advantage of the ability to take an adventure on the government's dime.

We had Soldiers visit Germany and



Italy and we are all waiting for them to come back to tell the stories.

I know the stories will cause some Soldiers to want to take an adventure of their own and go somewhere new while on leave.

January brought the promotion of two outstanding Soldiers.

We promoted Pfc. Barwick to specialist, and promoted PV2 Dvorak to private first class. Congratulations to both.

We appreciate all the support that we continue to receive from the family readiness group, our Adopt-a-Company organizations and the rear detachment.

Your support makes the time here more manageable.

Undertaker 6

FPs, Soldiers celebrate graduation, finishing exercise

**Story and photos by
Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.**

BAGHDAD – Like a family reunion, Soldiers with 2nd Platoon, Company F, 52nd Infantry Regiment and Iraqi Federal Police Explosive Ordnance Disposal directorates greeted each other with hugs, laughter and eccentric handshakes.

While a normal welcoming for the two groups, there was a sense of excitement Dec. 31 as the five trainers from 2nd Plt., Co. F, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division prepped their eight EOD FP trainees for a culmination exercise leading to the first graduating class of Co. F's Violator EOD Security Training Course on Forward Operating

Base Prosperity.

After three weeks of training, Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Gomez, a platoon sergeant with Co. F, said he and his Soldiers are confident in the skills of the EOD FPs.

"[My Soldiers] trained them to the point where they can actually feel comfortable fighting side-by-side with these guys," said Gomez, a Denver native. "I wouldn't have a problem doing a joint mission with those guys."

The EOD FPs showed their eagerness and willingness to learn every day of the course by training long hours and even staying later to make sure they learned all they could. They regularly asked the 2nd Plt., Co. F Soldiers to teach them more.

Training began with roping off sections of the platoon's area with 550 cord and engineer tape but progressively evolved into an intricate training exercise around FOB Prosperity.

The final exercise included such



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf.Div.

Policemen with the Iraqi Federal Police Explosive Ordnance Disposal Directorates stand in formation during a graduation ceremony held for them after completing the final event of Violator EOD security training course at Forward Operating Base Prosperity here, Dec. 31.

tasks as reacting to enemy contact – mounted and on foot – and clearing buildings.

The EOD FPs kicked in doors, eliminated enemy threats and disarmed a suicide bomber as a part of the exercise.

During a react-to-enemy-contact scenario and a flank exercise lane, a policeman was required to perform first aid on a fellow policeman by placing a tourniquet around his gunshot-wounded leg.

Pvt. Laith Mohammed, a policeman with the EOD FP, said he'll miss training with the 2nd Plt., Co. F, 52nd Inf. Regt. Soldiers, who are attached to 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment, but he is happy with the new skills and lessons he learned.

"My favorite part was reacting to an ambush and maneuvering because

of the teamwork with security and EOD," said Laith.

At the end of the exercise, after the EOD FPs successfully completed their tasks, everyone regrouped at the platoon living area and held a graduation ceremony, where the 2nd Bn., 12th FAR commander, Lt. Col. Kevin Murphy, spoke.

"This is the first class, but there will be many more," Murphy said, adding that the success of the first class has paved the way for future classes to be given by the Co. F Soldiers.

"The bottom line is they came in here with a little bit of skills," said Gomez, "and now they're leaving here three weeks later feeling more confident in themselves and their ability to handle any situation that they may encounter out in sector."

...**GOLF** from page 10

really fun to do.”

Not only were Soldiers hitting golf balls with the new clubs, but their Iraqi Army counterparts got in on the action as well.

“I have never played golf before,” said Capt. Nomas, the commander of Company 3, 1st Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Division. “It was real fun learning to play from the Soldiers, and I even hit the ball good one time.”

The Soldiers said they were happy to have received the golf clubs, but they also understood that the organi-

zations and families who sent them were sending something more than that.

“It wasn’t just getting golf clubs that was great, but it was the fact that we were on the minds and on the hearts of people who care about the guys out here,” said Roberts. “That’s what’s truly important to us.”



Photo by Spc. Luisito Brooks, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

First Lt. David Fahs, executive officer of Company A, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division hits a golf ball here, Jan. 9, with a golf club donated by organizations and families from the Fort Lewis, Wash. area.

...**TOMAHAWKS** from page 13

Additionally, our platoons understood the importance of working closely with the IA and local leaders and, in turn, began conducting operations forward from JSS Al Awad and JSS Hor Al Bash. This technique has proved successful for both our partnership and transition by allowing our platoons to empower the Soldiers of 2nd Bde., 37th IA Div. through instruction on planning for operations, logistical support, and training. In fact, Sgt. 1st Class Bryant, Staff Sgt. Gonzalez, and Staff Sgt. Sherry led a marksmanship range for 3rd Battalion, 2nd Bde., 37th IA Div. to familiarize the IA with newly issued M-16 rifles.

Capt. Adnon, commander of 3rd Bn., 2nd Bde., 37th IA Div., was impressed with the knowledge, proficiency, and professionalism of our 1st Platoon NCOs and has requested additional marksmanship training in the future.

The deployment thus far for the Soldiers of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 23rd Inf. Regt. has been a varied and interesting experience.

We have already seen a large amount of central Iraq and have worked with three ISF brigades and countless local leaders.

We will continue to support our new IA partners as they

prepare for the historic March Iraqi National Elections. The dedication of Kamel and his men have made our move to the Taji area easy and fulfilling and we look forward to the remaining months during which we will support transition efforts with 2nd Bde., 37th IA Div.



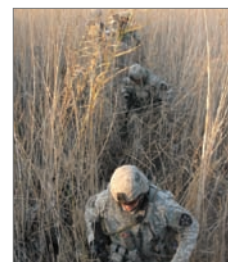
Photo by U.S. Army

A student from the Al Madina Al Monawara School reads a book received during a visit by 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 37th Iraqi Army Division. The school will serve as a polling site during the March Iraqi National Elections.

On the back cover:

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – During a search for insurgents and improvised explosive devices southeast of here, Soldiers from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division navigate through a thick field of bamboo.

Photo by Spc. Luisito Brooks, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.



STRYKER BRIGADE...

...TO THE OBJECTIVE!!!

