

THE RAIDER

Tribe

April 2010

Vol. 1, Issue 7



"To The Objective!"

RAIDER 6

COLONEL JOHN NORRIS

4th SBCT COMMANDER



Raider Tribe,

The biggest Iraqi Army success to date, the deaths of al-Qaeda in Iraq's top two leaders, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi and Abu Ayyub al-Masri was made possible by Iraqi units we partner with.

An Iraqi Army Soldier working a checkpoint recognized a face off a most wanted poster. He and his fellow Soldiers detained the man and from this arrest, IA intelligence officers were able to develop several leads. These leads, coupled with tips from local citizens, lead to the operation south of Tikrit that resulted in the deaths of the AQI leaders. Even more important than that was the discovery of documents, computers, and other materials that have lead to successful operations against AQI commanders in Ninawa, Baghdad, and Anbar, crippling the organization.

To further develop the growing partnership with the Iraqi people, my partner Staff Maj. Gen. Ahmed, the 6th Iraqi Army Division commander, has committed to working with the shaykhs of Abu Ghraib.

On April 22, he hosted a historic security summit with 70 shaykhs representing the 17 tribes of the Abu Ghraib Qa'da. The 17 tribal leaders all signed a document stating that the shaykhs and influential leaders would assist the security forces in protecting the people to institute security and eradicate the criminal and terrorist threats. This summit shows commitment by all parties to bring peace to the area and allows for the continuation of the nearly \$352 million

of economic and government projects in the area from U.S. Army, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and USAID.

These projects have been coordinated through the local governments, Iraqi ministries and tribal leaders to ensure they meet the needs of the people. They have included medical clinic repairs, schools, solar lights, drinking water pumps, sewage treatment plants and business grants. One area that the American agencies will be focusing on heavily over the next few months is agriculture; yes Raiders are now in the farming business. We are now growing opportunity and economic prosperity verses terrorism.

Over the next few remaining months, we plan to spend 3.5 million of the U.S. Army's dollars and half a million dollars from USAID and the Embassy. The money will help farmers learn new techniques from growing crops in greenhouses, to more efficient irrigation techniques that use half of the amount of water currently used. Demonstration farms will be established to facilitate this training and show local farmers the benefits of these methods. Nearly 200 farmers have been identified to receive greenhouses, seed and fertilizers. Beekeeping classes have been very popular, providing honey to local markets and helping pollinate the crops of area farmers.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly congratulate the many Raiders, officers and noncommissioned officers recently selected for promotion to the next higher grade and who reenlisted for continued service. Each of these selections is significant and indicates the



potential and the talent that we have in the brigade. The brigade had 12 officers selected for promotion to major, 82 first lieutenants selected for captain, 1 chief warrant officer 4 and 2 CW3 selections, 5 NCOs selected for master sergeant and 18 selected for sergeant first class. Additionally, I would also like to highlight that we had several Raiders selected for battalion command, Maj. Sam Fiol our brigade intelligence officer, Lt. Col. Schmitt, the 6th IA Div. Military Transition Team chief, Lt. Col. Watters, the 22nd IA Bde. MiTT chief and Lt. Col. Nichols on the alternate list. To date, 595 Raiders have reenlisted for continued service to our nation.

Congratulations to all of our Raiders who were selected and reenlisted. Well deserved.

As you know, we are beginning to transition to stability operations. Operation Iraqi Freedom will come to an

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RAIDER 7

CSM JEFFREY HUGGINS

4th SBCT COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR



Raiders,

With the Iraqi National Elections and the bulk of our deployment behind us and our eyes turned to the future it can be tempting to look beyond the roughly four months we have left in country and think "Mission Complete- Let's go home."

However, as the results of the Election remain in dispute, there is the possibility of increased sectarian violence throughout Iraq which is why now, more than ever, you must remain committed to our mission and maintain the same discipline and determination that you have displayed thus far.

Complacency kills -- and when combined with rumors of redeployment dates and daydreams of the future back in the States, can be a powerful ally for

our enemies.

Make no mistake, even with the deaths of the top two leaders of Al Qaeda in Iraq, there are still those who wish to do us harm. Do not do anything that would make their job easier.

To the noncommissioned officers, it is up to you to not just maintain, but exceed the standard, set the example and supervise your Soldiers in all that we do. At this time in the deployment when home and family can start to seem so close, you must continue to have an expeditionary mindset, always ready for whatever challenges may arise.

I am very proud of the Brigade and all of the Raider Team; we have accomplished much, but are not done yet. We will go home when our mission is complete, when we are told that Iraq no longer needs the assistance of the Raider Brigade.



Until that time comes, remember:

BE SAFE...

BE SMART...

And when required... BE LETHAL!

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
Damon Godinet
Graphic Artist

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"The Last Patrol"

The Raider Brigade is working with acclaimed artist James Dietz in creating a piece of art that captures the legacy of both American and Iraqi history with the original commissioning of "The Last Patrol". This print will represent the triumphs of the Raider Brigade as we assisted the Iraqi Security Forces and Government of Iraq in forging ahead on the road to both democracy and independence.

Do not miss out on this limited time offer to own museum quality art at a fraction of the price as it captures our brigade's legacy. Each print is only \$100 and will come with its own certificate of authenticity including historical narrative. Only by ordering during this presale can you ensure such deal. After the pre-sale has closed, these prints will become available starting at \$175.



For more information:

In Iraq contact:
your **UNIT PRINT REPRESENTATIVE**
In the United States contact:
michael.harding@4bct2id.army.mil
NOTE: Picture is works by artist James Dietz that were previously commissioned



4-2 SBCT takes another step forward

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

ABU GHRAIB, Iraq – With the stroke of a pen, the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division took another step forward towards the responsible reduction of forces in Iraq, transferring responsibility of Joint Coordination Center Abu Ghraib to their Iraqi Police partners during a ceremony here April 20.

Leaders from the 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., the Abu Ghraib Police district and the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior participated in the ceremony, which concluded with the signing of documents, officially transferring the JCC to the Iraqis.

“Today we transfer over the JCC to the government of Iraq, continuing our journey towards the strategic partnership with the sovereign country of Iraq,” said Lt. Col. John Leffers, commander of 1st Bn., 38th Inf. Regt.

Working closely with Col. Falah, the Abu Ghraib district police chief, 1st Bn., 38th Inf. Regt. Soldiers had maintained a constant presence at the JCC since arriving in country last fall. Past units, as a part of the “Surge”, used the JCC as a key location to secure the citizens of Abu Ghraib and provide a quick response for Iraqi Security Forces operating in the area.

More recently, a platoon of U.S. Soldiers, living out of tents at the small base would spend roughly two to three days at a time, said Capt. Joshua Betty, commander of Company C 1st Bn. 38th Inf. Reg. C Co. Soldiers from each of Betty’s three platoons have been fulfilling that requirement for the past several months, he said.

Soldiers with the battalion performed guard duty at the JCC as well as had personnel working in the joint operations center, providing a conduit of communication between U.S. and Iraqi forces, he said.

The sharing of intelligence with their Iraqi Police partners helped to improve security in the area, including during the March 7 National Elections. In total, more than 100 combined patrols have been enabled by the close-knit U.S. and Iraqi partners at the JCC during the past six months.



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

Lt. Col. John Leffers (right), commander of 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division and Col. Falah, the Abu Ghraib District police chief, sign a ceremonial certificate symbolizing the transfer of authority of Joint Coordination Center Abu Ghraib from U.S. forces to the Iraqi government April 20.

“It’s a sad day for me personally,” said Leffers, who said that he enjoys the close relationship he shares with Falah and will miss not being able to visit him as frequently now.

The Iraqi commander, calling Leffers his brother, agreed that the day of the handover was a bittersweet one.

“I am sad that my (time with) my friend and partnership in working with Lt. Col. Leffers is going to end,” said Falah, through a translator, thanking his American ally for his coop-

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end and this brigade will officially be the last combat unit to depart Iraq. The commander in chief has set the benchmark of Sept. 1, there will be less than 50,000 troops in Iraq, advising and assisting the

ISF. However, there are a number of factors that still need to happen to make this possible. The Iraqi government needs to peacefully form and a parliament needs to be seated. This is a political process and not one that we can influence at our

level. While this process unfolds, the Raiders will continue on to the objective and advise and mentor our partners until the mission is complete.

Raider 6
“To the Objective!”

Civil Affairs, 4-2 SBCT Soldiers support orphans

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

BAGHDAD – The orphans waited patiently, roughly 75 of them, as the U.S. Soldiers set up a security perimeter and brought their truck full of supplies into the Jamia Support Council building.

While most waited in orderly lines, one group of children performed a song welcoming the members of 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion and Company F, 52nd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, who were there to deliver humanitarian assistance goods March 29.

The delivery was part of an overall shipment of 20 tons of humanitarian assistance goods to 422nd, donated by a stateside non-governmental organization.

“It was a big success,” said 1st Sgt. Joe Winchester, first sergeant for Company B, 422nd CA Bn., explaining that the mission was the result of several months of planning and hard work. Shaykh Majid, from the Jamia Support Council, was involved in providing material support to local orphans and approached the civil affairs Soldiers about the possibility of getting some supplies for the children.

However, Winchester explained that process was easier said than done. “It’s not a simple thing to say we’re going to go on in and deliver some (humanitarian assistance),” he said.

During his last deployment, Winchester had worked with a U.S. based NGO,

Operation Give, which had provided humanitarian assistance supplies to his unit. Contacting them again, he was able to arrange for 20 tons of supplies to be donated and sent to Iraq for distribution.

Some of those humanitarian supplies were divided into care packages, broken down by age and gender, boxed up and handed out to the orphans at Jamia Support Council, with other supplies handed out at other locations.

But the mission was about more than just handing out supplies this one time, Winchester explained.

“Today established some credibility that we are able to deliver,” he said. “What we’re doing here is trying to develop some follow-on support.”

During the humanitarian drop, Winchester was able to meet with members of an Iraqi NGO that, if properly vetted, could be able to work directly with U.S. based NGOs like Operation Give through something known as the Denton Program. Under the program, he explained, the U.S. government will pay for the transportation of humanitarian supplies between credentialed NGOs. This would enable the orphans and other Iraqis in need to continue receiving aid long after Winchester and other U.S. Soldiers have left Iraq.

“I can step back and know when we’re leaving there’s still a steady stream of supplies coming in to those in need,” he said.



Photo by Sgt. Bryce S. Dubee, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.
Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers unload one of several boxes of humanitarian assistance supplies from a truck during a humanitarian assistance drop at the Jamia Support Council, March 29. Members of the 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion and Company F, 52nd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, delivered supplies to roughly 75 area orphans.



MANCHU DAY

Photos by Spc. Luisito Brooks
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.
& Sgt. Paul Adamson
4th Bn., 9th Inf. Regt.



MANCHUS

4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment



4-9 RELAXES, REENLISTS 49 ON 4/9

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

JOINT SECURITY STATION NASIR WA SALAM, Iraq – It's not every day Soldiers in a deployed environment, or any environment for that matter, get to take a whole day off to enjoy athletic recreation and team building.

The "Manchu's", Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, celebrated "Manchu Day", a day filled with spirited competition, concluding with a mass re-enlistment of 49 Soldiers April 9.

"We wanted to have a special day not only for the Manchu Soldiers who wanted to re-enlist, but also for the battalion," said Sgt. Maj. Lee Baleme, the operations sergeant major for 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Reg. "The purpose of Manchu Day is to build esprit de corps among the Soldiers," he said, adding that even with as many of the Soldiers as possible having the day off, the unit still maintained force protection, a quick response force and security on the base.

Organizing an event of this scale took a lot of planning in order to ensure its smooth success.

"Manchu Day has been in planning for about three months," said Baleme. "We just started putting ideas together, and before we knew it everyone was on board."

An organizational day for the unit had originally been planned as a chance to

play some games and blow off some steam. But, as Sgt. 1st Class Danny Davis, a career counselor for the battalion explained, a discussion with the battalion commander on how to complete the unit's annual retention mission took the event even further.

"We were just trying to come up with an idea of how we could have a big campaign toward closing that out, and through our conversation we came up with [doing] 49 re-enlistments by April 9th," he said, adding that the battalion actually exceeded their goal of 97 re-enlistments for the year, and has had 106 Soldiers re-enlist so far.

And while the re-enlistment ceremony played a large part in the day's festivities, the Manchu's spent the bulk of the day competing in various activities, including a warrior skills competition, an Iron Man challenge, basketball, football, and video game tournaments.

"Everyone one was enjoying the sports and there wasn't any fighting, but (instead) a good competitive spirit," said Baleme.

For Spc. Codey Clay, an administrative assistant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, the event that stood out for him was the warrior skills competition.

The competition involved six-man teams from across the battalion not only racing around the battalion's area, but also being tested on the assembly and disassembly of weapons, radio com-

munication skills, first aid, vehicle recovery, and a stress shot.

"I wanted to prove that the guys in the [admin section] are just as tactical and technical as the other guys," said Clay.

Everyone was pushing themselves and that motivated everyone else, he added, saying that while his group placed second in the shooting competition, he was very proud of his team.

As the competitions came to a close, the unit gathered around a steel fire-pit, crafted in the form of the Manchu's crest.

Lt. Col. Mark Bieger, the Manchu's commander, called the formation to attention and the pit was lit, sending sparks and billowing smoke into the dark sky.

"This day is for all you Soldiers here," said Bieger. "For the 49 Soldiers that re-enlisted today, it is an honor serving with you."

As the flames climbed higher against the backdrop of an American flag and Stryker vehicles, the brigade commander, Col. John Norris, administered the oath of enlistment to the 49 re-enlisting Soldiers.

"My favorite part of the day was when the fire-pit was lit during the re-enlistment ceremony in front of the flag," said 1st Lt. Robert Hockman, the fire support officer with Company C; "That image will remain in my mind forever."



It's a bird! It's a plane! No, it's the Wasp III!

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

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – In today's warfare, being able to put a set of eyes on the enemy first, without the enemy knowing, greatly increases the success rate of the mission.

Soldiers with the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division were the first U.S. Army Soldiers in Iraq to receive training on the Wasp III, an unmanned micro-aerial surveillance system, and take it for a test flight April 24 around Camp Taji.

"This system is effective, lightweight and very adaptable," said Staff Sgt. Brian Phillips, a Raven unmanned aerial surveillance master trainer with Company C, 1st Battalion, 38th Inf.

Phillips also said a unit commander has the ability to launch the Wasp III from just about anywhere.

The whole system, including two planes weighing 16 ounces each, costs \$70,000, but for these Soldiers having that view point on the battlefield is priceless.

"[The Wasp III] exploits blind spots that a unit may have on the ground," said Phillips, a Springdale, Ark., native. "When you are out there, that can mean life or death."

During the training, Soldiers spent many hours in front of a projection screen, as the instructor went through slides that explained, in great detail, how to operate, maintain and fly the Wasp III.

Staff Sgt. Joshua White, an infantryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, throws the Wasp III, an unmanned micro-aerial surveillance system, into the wind April 21.

This micro-flier has multiple cameras attached that can send live video, day or night, to the controller on the ground several miles away. The amount of time these aerial surveillance systems can stay in the air depends on the pilots and weather condition.

Many of the Soldiers who attended the class said the best part of the training was seeing the Wasp III in the air because of its look and smooth flight.

"I think this is a great tool and the training was good, too," said Spc. Andrew Peters, a scout with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn., 38th Inf. Regt., 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. "The Wasp is really nice and flies really quiet, which [gives] us large advantage over the enemy and keeps our guys safe."

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

Regiment, 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. "A single Soldier, at the company or platoon level can throw the whole system on their back and carry it into the field,"

Iraqi Police learn crime scene preservation

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

TARMIYAH, Iraq – Finding evidence at a crime scene is like finding pieces of a puzzle. Ensuring that the pieces remain undisturbed is key to solving crimes.

To help in the collecting of valuable evidence, Soldiers from 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division gave Iraqi Policemen a class on crime scene preservation and reacting to an improvised explosive device training class at the Tarmiyah police station April 21.

“The purpose of this training was to identify how the IP should take control of a crime scene,” said Spc. Christopher Nollenberg, a cavalry scout with 2nd Platoon, C Troop. “If they can quickly cordon the area and preserve evidence, the better they can begin investigating these crimes.”

The training, beginning with a class portion and slide presentation, walked the IP step by step through the process of reacting to an attack and how to properly secure a scene to prevent evidence tam-



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

Staff Sgt. Joshua White, an infantryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, throws the Wasp III, an unmanned micro-aerial surveillance system, into the wind April 21.

pering.

“The class was very good and I am glad the U.S. Soldiers were able to come here,” said Muhamid, a newly recruited IP at the local station. “In the class, they answered all of our questions about what needed to be done.”

Moving from the classroom to the outside training area, the students prepared to execute what they just learned.

“I had a trigger man, a spotter, two innocent bystanders and someone who was injured by the blast already staged for the practical exercise,” said Nollenberg. “I yelled ‘BOOM!’ and they had to react accordingly.”

While moving through the training area, the IP began taking control of the chaotic scene.

Beyond just reacting to the attack, the IA Soldiers had to pay attention to the scene around them to look for clues related to the crime.

“They were communicating very well,” said Sgt. Gordon Heintzman, a team leader with 2nd Platoon, C Troop, 2nd Sqdn., 1st Cav. Reg. “They were able to find and arrest the triggerman, spotter and then perform first aid to the injured local.”

He said the IP moved through the scene with a purpose, securing the site of the attack.

In the confusion after the attack, Heintzman, a Yakima, Wash., native, added that a few mistakes were still made but overall the police officers seemed to get a good grasp on the training.

“Now that they know what right looks like, they can begin training other IPs,” Heintzman said. “The more knowledge we share with them the better, because we want them [to] remain self sufficient as we conduct our responsible drawdown of forces.”



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

Staff Sgt. Joshua White, an infantryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, throws the Wasp III, an unmanned micro-aerial surveillance system, into the wind April 21.



TOMAHAWKS

Capt. Ian Dietz

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



Tomahawks,

For Blackfoot Company, April proved to be one of the most challenging –yet, rewarding – months of the deployment thus far. We entered the month, riding high off the successful Iraqi elections, our return home one month closer, but with spirits tempered by just how much work we have left to do. Our partnership with 2nd Battalion, 35th Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division and the 3rd Emergency Response Battalion (ERU) in the Shat al-Taji district was stronger than ever, but the road to transition is lined with numerous critical tasks for each of our platoons.

Partnered with 1st Company, 2nd Bn., 35 Bde., 9th IA Div., 1st Platoon found itself facilitating security along the main supply route (MSR) that runs from Baghdad to Balad. Pursuing improvised explosive device emplacements by night, 1st Platoon worked to mentor their Iraqi partners to one day take responsibility for the highway. This meant engagements at IA checkpoints, in addition to standard patrols to towns near the MSR. Working closely with their IA partners, they helped facilitate humanitarian assistance drops. The platoon also helped establish a framework for security meetings between the IA and Iraqi Police at the local level. Resetting the historically contentious relationship between these two organizations is critical, and will prove instrumental in the future.

Second Platoon shares responsibil-

ity along the MSR, but spends most of its time in the palm groves along the Tigris River, partnering with the ERU. The ERU falls under the Ministry of Interior, yet still has security responsibilities along the lines of a regular army unit. The relationship between the two units has become strong enough that the ERU's commander, Iraqi Col. Mohamed, has cleared room in his barracks for the platoon's use and affords them the respect and courtesy of family. Together, they have worked to ensure a peaceful drawdown in the numbers of the Sons of Iraq with minimal impact on security.

The platoon has also taken responsibility for coordinating training and security at the Muthana Bridge, a vital point that controls access from Taji into Sadr City. Their efforts have proven vital to keeping secure both the main approach into Baghdad and infrastructure vital to the future of Iraq.

Third Platoon also works closely with the Iraqi Security Forces to secure the Taji Shore. Partnered with 2nd Company, 2nd Bn., 35 Bde., 9th IA Div., they patrol through the palm groves as well, helping the IA pursue threats in this remote area. They have also worked closely with the Hamamiyah Police. They have made huge strides in binding 2nd Company to the civilian population through humanitarian assistance drops and by encouraging the IP commander to meet on a regular basis with key shaykhs and local leaders. By bridging the gap between organizations and through their efforts to develop Iraqi



junior leaders, 3rd Plt. is building an increasingly effective and competent force, one that will ultimately drive the last of Al Qaeda out of the area.

Despite these new challenges we face, Blackfoot Company truly hit its stride in April. Every day brings with it a new spin on our mission – be it late-night counter-IED patrols, day-long humanitarian assistance drops, or simply leading Iraqi NCOs through classes, Blackfoot Soldiers work ceaselessly to set the conditions for the eventual transition. Our thoughts move increasingly toward home as we approach summer, yet there remains a number of gates through which we must pass first. By working closely with our partners in the Iraqi Police, Army, and ERU, Blackfoot Company cannot fail.

Capt. Ian Dietz
"Tomahawks!"

ePRT program creates "BUZZ"

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

SHATT AL TAJI, Iraq – A blossoming new program organized by the embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team-North is creating a buzz and giving area widows and divorcees a much sweeter future.

But the buzz being generated around the program is more than just a figure of speech, as the Iraqi women involved are learning the ins and outs of beekeeping.

On March 27, a graduation ceremony was held for 25 Iraqi women who completed the beekeeper training program here.

"These women are the heads of the household, many (because of) the sectarian conflict," said Mary-Denise Tabar, the public diplomacy and women's affairs advisor for ePRT-North. "The program aims to train local rural women on the theoretical and practical applications of basic beekeeping."

ePRT-North is embedded with the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division whose subordinate battalions provide security for the team, allowing them to work safely on projects such as this in the area north of Baghdad including Tarmiyah and the city of Taji.

Taught in four hour sessions over a period of six days, the course covered the proper care of bees and techniques to harvest their honey.

"The women were chosen by the non-government organization, Rafedain Foundation who know the community and the women who need it most," explained Tabar.

Interest in the beekeeping course proved to be extremely high, explained Tim Lowery, an agricultural specialist with the



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

A master beekeeper shows off a comb with hundreds of bees during a women's beekeeping training program graduation ceremony March 27.



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

A master beekeeper passes out a section of buzzing bee hive during a women's beekeeping training program graduation March 27.

ePRT, and having received more applications than there were available seats, the team is already planning more courses for the future.

Upon completion of the training each woman received their own active and healthy beehive, containing thousands of the buzzing insects, along with all the necessary equipment to operate it.

In total, the entire beekeeping training program including the 25 beehives for the graduates, tools and supplies cost approximately \$23,450, said Tabar.

Each beehive houses anywhere between 10,000 and 30,000 bees, that on the average can produce about 15 to 20 kilograms of honey a year. Bees also provide a valuable resource for local farmers, pollinating their crops.

"For most of these women, this is how they earn income for their households," said Tabar. "They can sell a kilo of honey anywhere from \$20 to \$50."

During the graduation ceremony, family and friends looked on as the new beekeepers were called forward receive their certificates and beehives, and showed their support for this accomplishment with rounds of applause.

Honey has brought these women dealing with great adversity

together, and with this new skill, it will reduce their image as a burden on their family or society.

One graduate was so overwhelmed that she was brought to tears during the ceremony.

"A women told me that she was so thankful for everything and can remember having bees as a child," said Lowery, "She said that she would raise the bees like they were her own children."



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

Two newly certified beekeepers carry a beehive into the bee sanctuary after the graduation ceremony for women beekeepers March 27.



ROCK 6

Lt. Col. John Leffers

1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment Commander



Greetings Rock Warriors!

March proved to be a successful month for the Rock of the Marne Soldiers. The successful turnout of the Iraqi National Election has shown our partners are capable of maintaining an acceptable level of peace and law and order within their society.

Attack Company continues to patrol their area aggressively with their partners to reduce and eliminate any threat while new elected government is properly seated.

On April 16, Co. A conducted a change of command ceremony. Incoming commander, Capt. Den-ny Dresch assumed command. We are happy to welcome him to the Rock Battalion! The many attributes Capt. Dresch brings will carry Co. A through the rest of deployment and well in to the reset phase.

Bayonet Company recently completed a change of command in late March as Capt. Matthew Greb left to command Hunter Company, and Capt. Corbett Baxter assumed command. Capt. Baxter has seamlessly injected himself in to his new role.

Co. B continues a strong focus on civil improvement projects. As time draws closer to our closure, Co. B is continuing to complete these projects to improve

the quality of life for the local populace.

Chaos Company is in the final phases of turning the Joint Coordination Center Police Station over to the Iraqi Police. They have also been working diligently on civil improvement projects. Several Commanders' Emergency Response Program (small business grants) projects have been approved to help local shop improve their daily operations and stimulate the immediate local economy.

Hunter Company also completed a change of command. We said goodbye to Capt. Blevins and welcomed Capt. Greb (formerly Co. B commander). We look forward to his continued leadership in the Rock Battalion.

"The successful turnout of the Iraqi National Election has shown our partners are capable of maintaining an acceptable level of peace and law and order within their society."

-Lt. Col. John Leffers

The Company has been occupied with several projects within the Rock footprint.

The Battalion Staff has been working to produce the plan for transition for the next several months for the companies to use as a basis for planning their own operations.

Lastly, I would like to recognize a



few milestone promotions that have taken place the past couple weeks.

Congratulations to the following: newly promoted Capt. Mark Fisher in Co. C; promotable to master sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Johnson, Rear-Detachment noncommissioned officer in charge; and selected to be promoted to sergeant

first class, Staff Sgt. William Payne in Co. B and Staff Sgt. Luis Mora in Co. A.

In closing, thank you for your continued support of all the Rock Soldiers and their families.

**Rock 6
"Rock of the Marne!"**

BUILDING A FOOTBRIDGE FOR SAFE PASSAGE

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



This footbridge, which was destroyed two years ago by an improvised explosive device, still stands but is in serious need of repair. The bridge will be rebuilt using funds from the U.S. Army's Commander's Emergency Response Program, allowing for a safer way for pedestrians, especially children, to cross the busy street.



“The most important thing is the safety of the children...”

***-Capt. Talgin Cannon
Joint Project Management Office
HHC, Bde.***

Soldiers with 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. take first step in ensuring safer routes for schoolchildren

ABU GHRAIB, Iraq – Traveling to school should be a fun and safe experience for children; but in this neighborhood, the journey to a good education means crossing a treacherous road.

Capt. Talgin Cannon, a member of the joint project management office from 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, travelled to the area to discuss a project to rebuild a footbridge with a local construction company manager April 6.

The footbridge was destroyed by an improvised explosive device about two years ago, he said, explaining that rebuilding the footbridge would allow safe traveling for the locals in the neighborhood trying to cross the busy road.

“The most important thing is the safety of the children here,” said Cannon. “The bridge will help get these kids to school safely without getting hit by a speeding car.”

According to several sources, including local Iraqi Police and District Area Council members, at least five children have been killed while trying to cross the busy road this year alone.

“For these kids it’s like playing a game of leap frog with their lives every day to go to school and then return home,” said Cannon, an Elkin, N.C., native.

For this very reason, reconstruction of the footbridge was the number one project nominated by the council members for completion in the area, which will be funded through the U.S. Army’s Commander’s Emergency Response Program, he said.

A local construction company was contracted to build the bridge, which will span 25 meters across the two-way road. The cost of the footbridge is estimated at \$84,000 and will take several months to complete.

This most recent meeting between Cannon and the contractors was more or less a formality, ensuring that everything was on track in getting the project up and running.

“We didn’t stay out there long because the construction company knew what needs to be done,” said Cannon. “All they really need was the ‘OK’ from us.”

Many Soldiers that conduct missions in this area say that the need for this bridge is evident.

“I do a lot of traveling on this road, and it really concerns me to see small kids run across this road,” said Sgt. Reginald Chretien, a team leader with the Military Police platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., from Beaumont, Texas. “There are vendors on the sides of the road, and it attracts a lot of people walking across this busy road, and there is a school right there.”

He added that it’s a big problem with people running across busy streets in this area and getting hit.

These Soldiers saw a need and are meeting that need. Now that the project is underway, the locals can rest assured that safe travel across this road is in the near future.

“For the people in this community, this bridge means a lot,” said Cannon. “I am just glad that we are able to get this project going now.”



BLACKHAWKS

Capt. David Culver

A Troop, 2nd Sqdn., 1st Cav. Regt. Commander



Troopers, families, and friends of the Blackhawks,

Salutations from Joint Security Station Tarmiyah!

Now that the Iraqi National Elections have come and gone, Arrow Troop has worked diligently with our Iraqi Security Force partners to maintain the positive momentum throughout the area. This hard work has paid off; the security in Tarmiyah has reached an all time high.

In mid-March, 2nd Platoon was selected to conduct a combined air assault with the Iraqi Army in order to clear islands in the Tigris River. Working closely with the Iraqi Army, 2nd Platoon instructed them in planning and execution of air assault operations. This has expanded their operational capabilities while simultaneously denying the enemy concealment. In support of the air assault the Troop Mortars brushed the dust off of their guns and fired multiple illumination missions across the OE.

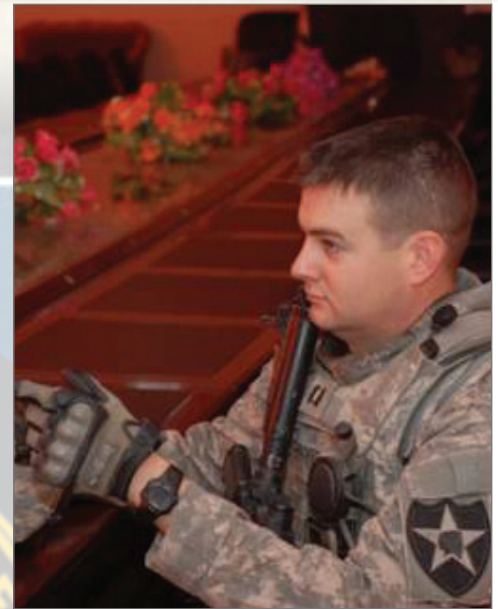
Additionally, Arrow Troop has supported a number of Iraqi Army clearance operations surrounding Tarmiyah. These operations were planned entirely by the Iraqi Army with limited support and from us. The operations have denied insurgent elements a safe haven and limited their ability to move maneuver. The excellent work by Arrow Troopers and

their ISF counterparts have made March and April the safest months in Tarmiyah since we have arrived.

As our partnership with the Iraqi Army has remained strong, our partnership with Iraqi Police has improved greatly. Mr. Tim Strickland, the Squadron's International Police Advisor, has been instrumental in the Troop's efforts to improve the capabilities of the local police.

He has provided the law enforcement training the Iraqi Police have needed desperately.

His training, with supported from Arrow Troop, has created a renewed vigor in the Iraqi Police. They have begun to assume more security functions in the



food and bonding for the guys.

"The excellent work by Arrow Troopers and their ISF counterparts have made March and April the safest months in Tarmiyah since we have arrived."

-Capt. David Culver

area.

Our work with the Tarmiyah Police has grown by leaps and bounds in just a few weeks.

The month of March ended on a light note. The Troop took the 28th to kick back, relax, and recharge their batteries.

The 1st Armor Division rock band, the "Dirty HESCOs", visited the JSS and put on an excellent show while the cooks grilled up some meat for everyone to enjoy. All in all it was a great time of good

been rewarded with more rank and responsibility.

Thank you again for all of the support our families have provided us. I am proud of Arrow Troop and to be a part of the Blackhawk Squadron.

Capt. David Culver
"Shoot Straight!"

SNAPSHOTS FROM



Photo by 1st Lt. Steve Papenthien, 1st Bn., 38th Inf. Regt. 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div.
BAGHDAD – Sgt. Jay Storsteen, with 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment shows James Gandolfini, an actor on the television show "The Sopranos," the inside of a Stryker during Gandolfini's visit with 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, Apr. 2.



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



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



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.
BAGHDAD – The Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment fire direction officer, 1st Lt. Matthew Basilico, kneels beside a humvee while scanning the area below a bridge in the battalion's operational environment for insurgents placing explosives or other threats here, Apr. 17.

THE BRIGADE...



Photo by Sgt. Paul Adamson, 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Regt., 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div.
NASIR WA SALAM, Iraq – Spc. Christian Duran, a sniper with Company B, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, provides security from the window of a building here, April 22 during a humanitarian assistance drop.



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



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



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.
BAGHDAD – Lt. Gen. Joseph Peterson, the deputy commanding general, United States Army Forces Command, shakes the hand of a 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division Soldier and gives him a coin here, Apr. 15.



VIKINGS

Capt. Nicholas Dvonch

HSB, 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment Commander



Fellow Vikings, families, and friends,

The Headquarters and Service Battery continues to operate out of three locations encompassing about a quarter of Baghdad, supporting four batteries and companies.

One of our main locations, Joint Security Station Justice, has become symbolic of the Raider Brigade handing back military installations to the Iraqi people.

Nestled between the Tigris and the enclave of Kadhimiya, JSS Justice remains a strategically relevant location for both the Iraqi Federal Police and the Iraqi Army.

Partnered with them is 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment and their respective United States Transition Teams.

Every day the Vikings strive to make JSS Justice a little better. We do this through security improvements as well as improvements in quality of life.

HSB's first sergeant, 1st Sgt. Estevez, recently paired up with 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army's command sergeant major to increase security measures around the Iraqi Brigade Headquarters. Using organic assets and Iraqi materials, these two noncommissioned officers built more than force protection, but a bond and trust between our two units.

These improved security measures will not only enhance JSS Justice, but in the long term will increase stability in the re-

gion by providing a safe environment for the Ministries of Interior and Defense to work out of.

It is important to note that whatever the task may be, whether it be drawdown, security improvement, or partnership, HSB strives to maintain the quality of life for 2nd Bn., 12th FAR Soldiers and our sister units ensuring a great dining facility, gym, laundry and repair services as well as monthly visits by the Post Exchange Trailer, Finance and Postal.

As we move into summer during this post-election period, HSB is beginning to focus on the joint inventory and hand over of the security station. Working

“Every day the Vikings strive to make JSS Justice a little better.”

-Capt. Nicholas Dvonch

with local contractors and base closure teams, the battalion will move to retrograde over seven years of Army installation equipment, as well as our organic property back to Victory Base Complex. Although this is no small task, the Vikings are ready for the challenge.

Almost everything must go, from containerized housing units and shower trailers to military grade equipment. The



U.S. compound, which once housed three U.S. infantry battalions, will now be paired down to support a much smaller footprint. Those areas once used to run combat operations will be repatriated to local security forces with furniture and infrastructure to facilitate further growth.

In the near future, the United States will operate out of Joint Security Station Justice only at the pleasure of the Iraqi Government and its people. The great strides that the Government of Iraq has made over the past seven years is readily reflected in this endeavor.

Capt. Nicholas Dvonch
“Vikings!”



IRAQI ARMY LEADS LIVE- FIRE RANGE

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

JOINT SECURITY STATION JUSTICE, Iraq – Iraqi Army Soldiers stood silently in a line, their weapons at the ready. Finally, the voice of the 22nd Brigade, 6th IA Division brigade sergeant major resonated loudly through a bullhorn and the Soldiers unleashed a barrage of live rounds into paper targets mounted on wooden frames nearly 25 meters in front of them.

In the distance, members of the 22nd Bde., 6th IA Div. Military Transition Team, who had previously led marksmanship training with the Iraqi Soldiers, attended the range this time merely as spectators. Instead, the officers and non-commissioned officers of the IA brigade mentored their own Soldiers, going over firing techniques and safety on the range, especially when using live ammunition April 19.

For many of the Soldiers, this was their first time using actual ammunition instead of dummy rounds or not having any at all, so even the 16 rounds they each were allotted was enough to motivate them.

Pvt. Muhammad E'mad Kathim said this was his first time firing and that he

had never even fired an AK-47 assault rifle in his life.

"It teaches me confidence in myself that I can fight," said Muhammad.

The confidence a Soldier has in his ability to fight is important in case he ever has to engage enemies out on the streets of Iraq, emphasized Capt. Ali, the 22nd Bde., 6th IA Div. Noncommissioned Officer Academy officer in charge.

Ali said there's a good chance that scenario could happen.

"These guys run checkpoints and face the enemy every day," said Ali. "They must be confident in themselves."

The Soldiers of the brigade usually train with their weapons once or twice a year, Ali added. Each time they gain better marksmanship skills.

"The main thing is for them to understand how to prepare [for an attack] and how they handle their weapons in battle," said Ali.

Because training is so rare, the brigade sergeant major, Sgt. Maj. Hakeem, noted weak points during the day's training and said he would add them to a list of things to improve at the NCO academy, where the Soldiers who trained at the range would be headed if they chose to continue a career in the military.

Hakeem said a lot of the Soldiers are young and have never experienced any military training. Therefore, he doesn't expect them to know everything he, a 32-year veteran of the IA, does about marksmanship.

The day spent at the range was the beginning to a much more expansive training mission that the MiTT Soldiers have planned. The range proved to the MiTT Soldiers, including the team leader, Lt. Col. John Watters, that the training they had given the Iraqis had positive effects since they were capable of running their own operations one step at a time.

"The first step [is that] they're doing it," said Watters, a Jarrettsville, Md., native. "They're out here, it's safe, [and] you can tell the instructors are helping."

Now that they know the IA can take what is taught to them and run with it in true "train the trainer" fashion, the MiTT has scheduled more marksmanship training for the IA Soldiers that can be used to protect themselves and the people of Iraq as the transition teams and other U.S. troops proceed with the responsible reduction of forces from the country.

A look inside the JOC

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

JOINT SECURITY STATION JUSTICE, Iraq – A small team of Soldiers sits obscured behind a vast array of radios, computers, maps and television screens inside the 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment joint operations center.

Without the long hours of hard work by the “Vikings” in the JOC, men on the ground would not be aware of potential threats in their area, commanders could not make informed tactical decisions, units could not be provided air support, and timely and accurate information would not be shared with higher headquarters.

Because JSS Justice is a combined base, a small group of Iraqi Soldiers from one of the three Iraqi Army brigades with whom the 2nd Bn., 12th FAR Soldiers share an expansive operational environment, emulates the field artillery Soldiers’ persistence and concentration in carrying out their duties.

Working in the JOC introduced Pfc. Damien Cooper, a radio telephone op-

erator with Headquarters Service Battery, 2nd Bn., 12th FAR, to a new culture as quickly as his first deployment came about. Cooper was assigned to the unit 30 days prior to deploying to Iraq.

“I deployed with complete strangers,” said Cooper. “It wasn’t that bad – everybody’s pretty cool.”

Cooper admits that trying to grasp the job of relaying information from all the batteries and patrols moving throughout the OE to the battle noncommissioned officer and battle captain of the JOC was difficult at first. However, he wasn’t alone in learning.

“My peers gave me the knowledge they had, which helped a lot,” said Cooper.

Another RTO on his first deployment, Pfc. Kevin Ellen, said working in the JOC takes a lot of concentration because as information pours in, the RTOs have to listen carefully to whoever is providing the information; relaying the wrong information could cost lives.

The day shift battle NCO, Sgt. Jason Green, has lived on both sides of the radio.

On his last deployment with 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, Green was in a line battery, executing missions like the ones he now monitors on his computer and over the radio. He believes both jobs go hand in hand, and are equally important in accomplishing the overall mission.

“Without us being in the JOC, the [Soldiers] wouldn’t

be able to carry out their operations due to the fact that we disseminate information,” said Green.

Sgt. 1st Class Douglas Shank, a fire support NCO, said he believes it’s the “Joes” on the ground who have the tougher job.

“I think they do the hardest part, being out there and being in harm’s way,” said Shank.

However, he acknowledges that if they didn’t have a JOC, things on the ground wouldn’t run as smoothly.

As the battle captain, responsible for everything that goes on in JOC, it’s up to Sgt. 1st Class Steven Swift to make sure that all the Soldiers underneath him are doing their jobs efficiently.

At first, conducting operations in the JOC had a few challenges as Swift’s Soldiers, many on their first deployment, settled into their roles, relying heavily on the more experienced Soldiers. But relatively quickly, and with a lot of hard work, he said, his troops stepped up to the challenge.

“Through cross-training they can pretty much operate every system in there and I don’t have to rely on one guy who [is] the individual for that station,” he said.

An example of that versatility and commitment to success is displayed by Pfc. Levi Miller, the operator of the Command Post of the Future, who is responsible for creating a storyboard of information for each significant activity that occurs in the battalion’s area.

Because 2nd Bn., 12th FAR’s area is one of the most travelled through, it’s important for Miller to send the correct information necessary up to brigade, he said.

Miller insists that everyone in the JOC has a very important job and together they add to one of the brigade’s overall missions for this deployment, which is keeping both the Soldiers in the brigade and the people of Iraq safe.



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

Pfc. Levi Miller, operator of the Command Post of the Future and assigned to Headquarters Service Battery, 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment, conducts a radio check with the Mansour Joint Operation Center to ensure communication is working between them, April 18.



FORGE

702nd Brigade Support Battalion



702nd BSB Adds Flavor to 6th Iraqi Army Operations

Story by Capt. Cale Hamilton
702nd BSB, 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div.

The 702nd Brigade Support Battalion recently engaged in a unique partnership exercise with cooks from the 6th Iraqi Army Headquarters.

Several weeks ago, members of the Logistics Training and Advisory Team located three Polish field bakeries sitting in the back of the 6th IA Headquarters motor pool. When the LTAT began questioning the IA Soldiers on how often the equipment was used, they learned that the equipment had never been used and the Soldiers had no training on them. Seizing the opportunity, the LTAT began working with the equipment to prepare a class for their Iraqi partners.

The first challenge was learning how to operate the equipment. The equipment was brand new, still wrapped with the factory seal in some places, but after sitting out untouched in the Iraqi heat and dust some key components of the bakery were inoperable.

After the first two systems failed to start, Sgt. Richard Ruby and Spc. Robert McKenzie, cooks from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, successfully fired up the third and final bakery after a few coughs from the engine.

Once the cooks put the equipment into operation, they began prepping the menu and practicing on all of the differ-

ent functions provided by the system. The system consists of two trailers and is perfect for the basic menus preferred by the Iraqis.

The main trailer holds two ovens able to reach temperatures of over 400 degrees Celsius. This is ideal for the breads and meat the Soldiers eat on a daily basis.

The second trailer is a steam cooker able to cook six different items at once. It is used to cook large quantities of rice, vegetables, and even brew Chai tea and can be easily removed from the trailer to place in a serving line.

After preparing two practice meals of chicken, vegetables, rice, and bread, Ruby and McKenzie were ready to train the Iraqis.

One week later, the two Soldiers conducted a two-day class for 16 Iraqi cooks.

Day one consisted of the U.S. cooks taking the Iraqi cooks step by step through the set up, capabilities, and operation of the equipment culminating with a practice meal cooked and shared together. Following clean up of the two trailers, the Iraqis and U.S. Soldiers closed all of the equipment and prepared for the day two.

Day two reversed the roles with the Iraqis taking the lead on set-up and preparation with Ruby and McKenzie there to simply answer questions. The

equipment was moved next to the Iraqi Dining Facility and food was prepared for the Iraqi Soldiers on the base.

After the outstanding hands-on instruction from day one, the Iraqi cooks were able to go through the complete operation with little assistance from the trainers.

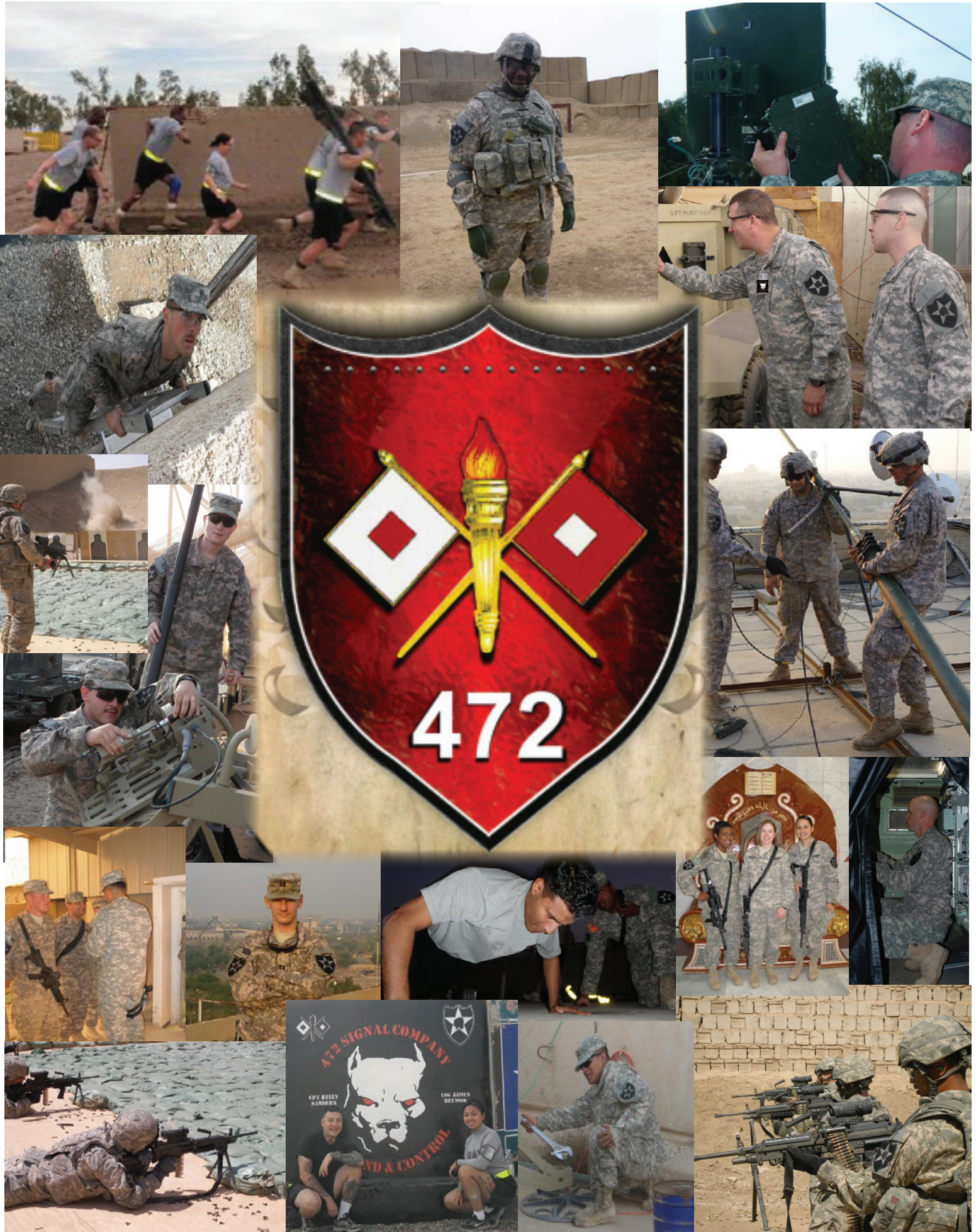
Midway through day two staff Brig. Gen. Haitham, the 6th IA Division deputy commander, made a surprise visit.

Through an interpreter, he stated how proud he was seeing his Soldiers working side by side with the Americans helping make the Iraqis more capable to sustain their forces.

Col. John Norris, the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division commander, also stopped by and said he was very pleased with what he saw.

"This equipment gives the Iraqis a great opportunity for civil-military operations. They can show up to one of the local villages and cook fresh food their civilians right on the spot," he said to Lt. Col. Gary Martin, the 702nd BSB commander.

The Soldiers of 702nd BSB were also honored to provide the Soldiers of the 6th Division one more capability as we continue to guide the Iraqi Army towards irreversible momentum in a sustainable combat force.



DOG 6

Capt. Kelly Sanders

472nd Signal Company Commander



Raider Soldiers, families, and friends,

Signal Soldiers are the first Soldiers moved into theater during deployments and the last out. Our communications equipment enables the brigade commander, maneuver commanders, and the Soldiers on the ground to rapidly and efficiently communicate both internally and externally in order to maintain command and control of the brigade combat team.

As Signaliers, we represent one-third of the Soldiers mantra 'Shoot, Move, and Communicate!' We take our jobs seriously and conduct ourselves with a sense of purpose and a feeling of pride. There is not a commander or senior non-commissioned officer in the Army who would deny the importance of their ability to communicate, and we are honored

and maintain the best possible quality of communications possible throughout the Raider Brigade.

Currently, the 472nd Signal Company is supporting more than 3,300 Soldiers with connectivity spread over three major forward operating bases and four joint security stations.

Our FM Retransmission network enables the brigade command net to propagate across the entire Raider operational environment and beyond.

Our Soldiers have pioneered the use of new and advanced signal communications equipment such as the Highband Network Radio system and the High Antennas for Radio Communications antenna which allows us to push Enhanced Position Location Reporting System and



supports our Warfighters with a 99% quality of service rating.

It is important to note we are not alone in this mission. We work hand in hand with the brigade and battalion S6 shops to provide these services.

The Soldiers of 472nd Signal Company have proven their metal in this difficult transitional period, and will continue to offer the best signal support in theater until the brigade is complete.

"There is not a commander or senior noncommissioned officer in the Army who would deny the importance of their ability to communicate, and we are honored to provide that service."

-Capt. Kelly Sanders

to provide that service.

With a combination of Combat Net Radio, satellite communications, and tactical internet protocol networks, our specially trained and technically competent Soldiers tirelessly work to improve

FM Nets off the PTDS balloon.

Our use of commercial off the shelf technology such as Harris 7800 radios and Motorola AN-50s have enabled our Network Operations cell to craft a robust and redundant tactical network which

Capt. Kelly Sanders
"Command and Control!"



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

Iraqi doctors from Yarmouk Hospital intently watch Spc. Nicole Festini treat "casualty" Spc. Alan Horsford, both combat medics with Task Force 28th Combat Support Hospital, during a tour of the hospital as a part of Operation Medical Alliance held at Sather Air Base April 7.

28th CSH, 4-2 SBCT welcome Iraqi doctors to military base

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

BAGHDAD – Iraqi doctors at Yarmouk Hospital had to cut short a tour for U.S. doctors and Soldiers when an Iraqi Army soldier suffering from a gunshot wound was suddenly brought into their ward.

As doctors from the hospital rushed to save the soldier's life, the Americans witnessed firsthand how the Iraqi medical system operates.

This encounter led to a suggestion by Dr. Khalil, an anesthesiologist with Yarmouk Hospital, that the Iraqi doctors see how their American counterparts handle similar traumatic injuries in their medi-

cal facility.

Eight Iraqi physicians were given that opportunity during a tour of the 28th Combat Support Hospital on Sather Air Base April 7.

This was the first time the medical information exchange program, Operation Medical Alliance, had taken place on a U.S. military base. The program was organized by 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.

The program, which has been conducted on a regular basis for several months, provides Iraqi medical professionals with knowledge and tools necessary to improve Iraqi healthcare through medi-

cal lectures and professional discussions on medical practices and treatment.

At the American hospital for the first time, the Iraqi doctors appeared very interested in the up-to-date facility, raising their eyebrows in curiosity and whispering to one another. Khalil said he noticed many differences between his Baghdad hospital and the one he was currently standing in.

"Even though [the Intensive Care Unit rooms in Yarmouk hospital] are 10 times larger than this one over here, this one has ... capabilities to be able to do a lot more with it than the one I

have,” said Khalil.

The head nurse of the ICU, Maj. Jerry Ross, showed Khalil and the other doctors around the ICU and explained the capabilities of the facility, how they accommodate an overflow of patients and answered any questions his guests had. “I think it’s important that we [have] dialogue with host nation personnel and keep a good rapport with them, [and] have a good working relationship, because I know we learn a lot from each other,” said Ross.

Service members from each section of the CSH had an opportunity to interact with the Iraqi doctors and build on the working relationship mentioned by Ross. It was also an opportunity for everyone involved to broaden their cultural boundaries.

“Some of [the doctors from Yarmouk] graduated a long time ago and they haven’t left Iraq since, so it was a good experience for them to meet with foreign doctors who have the knowledge and expertise to exchange information,” said Khalil.

“Personally, it’s kind of a fulfilling experience,” said Ross. “Any other time, we just have a little bubble [around us] of taking care of our patients – we don’t

get outside the wire to interact with the locals.”

For Capt. Sean Riley, head nurse of the emergency medical treatment section, it wasn’t the first time he has had the chance to interact with Iraqis. On a previous deployment, he had helped train Iraqi policemen how to treat casualties at the scene of attacks or explosions.

Riley said this experience with Iraqis was a little different, because the people who visited were medical professionals and hold degrees in their respective specialties.

He said he was touched that one of the directors from Yarmouk Hospital, who attended the walk-through, was interested in what Riley had to say about the CSH organized system of treatment patients receive the moment they set foot in the door, through the trauma room, and all the way up until their departure from the hospital.

“That’s an honor to be able to maybe have a little bit of influence on the outcome of the future of their nation and medical healthcare,” said Riley.

At the conclusion of the tour, the Iraqi doctors encountered a similar situation that the U.S. Soldiers had witnessed at Yarmouk; an injured Soldier being

brought in for treatment by the Americans. Fortunately this time, the injuries were only simulated.

The “casualty”, played by Spc. Alan Horsford, a combat medic with the 28th CSH, yelled out in pain from the bed in the trauma room as his wounds seeped red-orange synthetic blood. CSH specialists kept conversation going with Horsford to calm him and learn what happened to him, as they scurried around the table and tended to his wounds. The Iraqi doctors peered over the shoulders of the medics, nurses and doctors surrounding the table, observing the situation as it played out.

At the end of the demonstration, the Iraqi doctors applauded their American counterparts.

Riley, along with many of the other specialists involved in the walk-through and final exercise, said they hoped that they imparted some knowledge to their counterparts so they can better assist their patients.

“We reinforced that the system works and has proven results,” said Riley; “I hope that they can take that back to their facility and apply ... our horizontal teamwork strategy and put it into effect so they’re successful.”

...TRANSFER from page 4

eration in keeping the district safe.

However the transfer of authority, while significant in the fact that it gives the IPs full responsibility for the installation, does not mean that the close bond between the units will end.

“For all intensive purposes, relationship-wise, the ceremony just means that we no longer live here,” said Betty.

Leffers agreed, saying that the “phenomenal” relationship he has enjoyed with the IPs will continue.

“Even though we are turning over the JCC today we are still going to remain partners,” he said. “The transfer strongly reinforces the confidence of the Government of Iraq and the people of Abu Ghraib in their [Iraqi Police]. They’re ready to lead.”

On the back cover:

JOINT SECURITY STATION SHEIKH AMIR, Iraq – A crane lifts a T-wall onto the bed of a truck April 9 as 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division Soldiers prepare to leave the JSS as part of the military’s responsible drawdown of U.S. Forces in Iraq.

Photo by Spc. Venessa Hernandez, Joint Combat Camera Center Iraq



STRYKER BRIGADE...

...TO THE OBJECTIVE!!!

