

# VANGUARD VOICE

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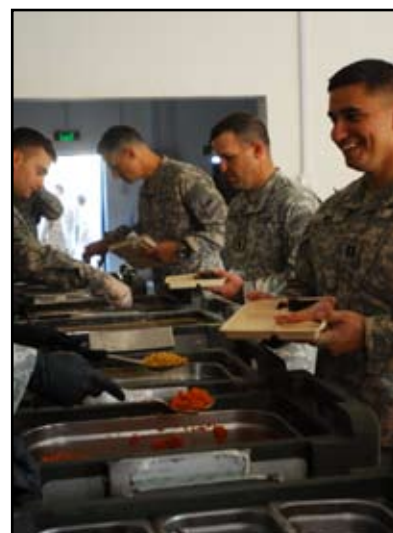
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On the Cover



*Pfc. Celesia Barnet, a medic with Company C, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, examines an Iraqi boy Nov. 13 during a combined medical engagement with Iraqi Security Forces in Alhamza, Iraq. (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)*

## Six months of strengthening the Iraqi Security Forces

Hello all. As we passed our six month mark, I looked back to appreciate all we have accomplished. It is impressive and hard to describe or measure. I often consider ways to explain to our Soldiers and Families just how important our time and effort has been; not just to our brigade mission, but to our nation. It is difficult to translate "great job" from things that aren't measured in numbers and stats. I sometimes use the analogy of watching a tree grow. You cannot stare at it and see any change, but as you come back over time, you can appreciate its growth.

As with most things here, we try to see it through the eyes of our counterparts. Ultimately, the success of the Iraqis is our success in the long term. Every day, as we work to strengthen their security forces, we have the opportunity to gain perspective of their point of view. I witnessed a great example the other day as I watched the training we're conducting with and for them at Al Asad. As you may know, we've gained an additional Cavalry Squadron; the Blackjacks of 4-10 CAV are now a part of our team. Their arrival provides us an additional capability to train Iraqi Army soldiers.

As I visited one of the Iraqi Army battalions (participating in their first "field" deployment ever) during training, one thing was very clear; they were loving it! Soldiers and leaders performing their combat related tasks, equipped with modern weapons and gear, excelling as individuals and teams. It was payback; not only due to the tremendous preparation efforts of all of our Soldiers over the past month, but to our Army over the past years. It's great to be a part of that progress and to have a hand in their chance at a peaceful future.

Every day there are similar examples like this in all we provide in strengthening the Iraqi Security Forces. Police emergency exercises, intelligence engagements to find extremists, or organizing a meeting to gather our counterparts so they can work on securing their people. Our time here, and the sacrifice we make by doing so; are worth it.

All of this is made possible through the support of each of our Families and all of those back home. I recognize that in each of these opportunities as it's easy to realize, no Soldier is here alone. Thank you for all you do both here and back in the states. It's an honor to be a part of this great team. We all look forward to returning home to our Families and friends with honor and pride in what we have accomplished.

**COL Lou Lartigue**  
**Commander**  
**4th Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division**



**COL LOU LARTIGUE**



**CSM JOE ALTMAN**





# Partnership takes FLIGHT

## Soldiers teach Iraqi Army counterparts air assault

Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas  
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

**C**AMP MEJID, Iraq—U.S. Soldiers are training alongside their Iraqi counterparts as part of Operation New Dawn’s mission to advise and assist the Iraqi Security Forces. ...However, Soldiers with 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, United States Division-Center, are taking combined operations to new heights.

Twelve Soldiers with the 7th Iraqi Army Div. participated in a combined air assault exercise Nov. 11 at Camp Mejid, Iraq. Instructors with the 2nd IA Aviation Squadron were on hand to teach a

class on the Iraqi UH-1 Huey helicopter, and Soldiers with the General Support Aviation Battalion, 1st Inf. Div. (attached to 4th AAB, 3rd Inf. Div.), spoke about the UH-60 Black Hawk.

“We explained to them how to enter and exit an aircraft for a quick air assault drop off,” said Spc. Brandon Pate, a Black Hawk crew chief with General Support Avn. Bn., 1st Inf. Div., and an Arkansas native.

“Exiting an aircraft is dependent on the terrain or environment you are in.”

Pate taught the new IA aviation troops multiple ways to load the aircraft and said this training is essential as U.S. troops prepare to withdraw from Iraq.

“They’ll be taking the mission here by themselves before too long, and it’s very helpful for them to have this knowledge,” he said. “They have a lot of ground to cover, and the best way to move troops is by air.”

The exercise helped foster new relationships between American and Iraqi forces, and helped to strengthen bonds of the new Iraqi aviation squad.

“We’re like brothers,” said one IA Soldier after his first ride in a helicopter. “We do everything together. We cover the biggest province in Iraq, and it’s important that we have a well-trained air force just like we have a well-trained ground force.”

Pate said the new aviation squad did well and looks forward to training with his new counterparts in the future.

“They were asking a lot of questions, which is always a good sign of learning, about what they could do to make themselves better at their new job,” he said.

“I’ve done a lot of things for our military in the eight years that I’ve been in. To actually come over here (Iraq) and sit down and teach somebody else something that I do is really an honor.”

**TOP RIGHT:** Iraqi Army Soldiers wait to load a UH-1 Huey during a basic air assault training class at Camp Mejid, Nov. 11. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)

**BELOW:** Spc. Brandon Pate, General Support Aviation Battalion, 1st ID, teaches 12 7th IA Div. Soldiers how to properly fasten a seat belt on the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter, Nov. 11.



**ABOVE:** An IA aviation soldier teaches 12 7th IA Div. Soldiers how to properly fasten a seat belt on the UH-1 Huey at Camp Mejid, Nov. 11.





## Al-Habbaniya Training Center is mission success,

**Capt. Tiffany M. Collins**  
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

Seen as a rite of passage among the U.S. Armed Forces, the Initial Entry Training graduation brings a certain enthusiasm and anxiety to the day's air. That same elation is captured in Al Anbar, Iraq, Nov. 29, as the passing of the flag from the senior graduating class of Iraqi Army soldiers to the junior class symbolizes change and the forward movement of troops as they are assigned to their first units and continue their military careers.

"Ten weeks ago you were civilians and now you are warriors for your country," said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Shoemaker, commander of 3rd Battalion,

15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, as he addressed the graduating class.

The most recent formation of about 1,250 troops marks the largest Initial Entry Training class to graduate from the Al-Habbaniya Training Center. Approximately 70 more soldiers graduated in December.

Constructed on the west bank of the Euphrates River, the Al-Habbaniya Training Center, dates back to 1936 when the British initially established it as the Royal Air Force Station Habbaniya and was utilized as a flight training school and a transport staging airfield during World War II. Most recently, HTC was used by Coalition Forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom as a Forward Operating Base to

run combat missions throughout Al Anbar Province, to include Fallujah and Ramadi.

Presently, Habbaniya has grown into a Regional Training Center, supporting both the 1st and 7th Iraqi Army Divisions, training about 12,000 soldiers this year.

In addition to the Initial Entry Training Course, the HTC also provides instruction for Military Occupational Specialty Qualifications, the Non-Commissioned Officer Educational System and two unit-level programs—the Commando Course and the Warrior Training Program.

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Snow, director of Iraq Training and Advisory Mission, U.S. Forces-Iraq, declared HTC mission complete, signifying U.S.

## graduates largest Iraqi Army initial entry class

Forces advisory role as hands-on trainers no longer necessary.

"With the downsizing of U.S. Forces, ITAM personnel no longer consist of specialized training teams," said 1st Lt. Katherine Schultz, advisor for ITAM.

"Essentially, our role at the Habbaniya Training Center now consists of working logistics requests through the Ministry of Defense."

Upon receipt of the mission to train more than 1,300 soldiers during this rotation, Staff Colonel Zuhair Dhurgham, commandant, immediately began to request the necessary logistics capabilities. Simultaneously, he refocused all cadre and training efforts on the basic training mission.

Capt. Joe Pimentel, commander

of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th AAB, said the only assistance Dhurgham requested was refresher training for his cadre on the M-16 rifle.

The curriculum at HTC is similar to the U.S. Armed Forces Basic Training Course. It consists of basic soldier skills including physical fitness, basic rifle marksmanship, radio communications, medical skills, and values and ethics, adopted by Dhurgham from the "Army Values."

There are more similarities in the training curriculum that the HCT adopted from the U.S. Army. For example, the ever popular obstacle, "the weaver" can be found among the various obstacles at the HTC endurance course, and at the entry to every

classroom, the latest version of the program of instruction is posted. Recent additions to the POI were written by Dhurgham, approved by the Iraq Ministry of Defense, and are now model doctrine for the Iraqi Army Basic Training Course.

"This course trains the professional soldier," Dhurgham said. "They will make dramatic changes to the Iraqi Army. They love their country and their job and if the lord wishes, they will successfully serve and protect the country of Iraq."

*Graduating Iraqi Army soldiers perform a karate demonstration at their graduation ceremony Nov. 29 at the Al-Habbaniya Training Center. (Photo by Capt. Tiffany M. Collins)*





# Fighting Crime

## 4-3 BSTB MPs teach Iraqi Police partners 1st response techniques

**Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas**  
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

**RAMADI, Iraq** – A loud blast resounds and a cloud of smoke hovers over a vehicle. Inside the hazy automobile lay the body of the terrorist who detonated the vehicle-borne improvised explosive device, killing himself and an innocent bystander. As the smoke clears, sirens soon replace echoes of the explosion.

Iraqi Police officers quickly ar-

rive at the Nov. 30 simulated crime scene to take part in an incident response exercise in Ramadi, Iraq.

“This exercise provided the U.S. forces with an assessment of what the Iraqi Police are good at and what they need to work on,” said Staff Sgt. Michael Burgos, a military police officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, and Philadelphia, Pa., native.

Burgos and two fellow MPs have been training their IP counterparts with the Ramadi Urban Police Headquarters on valuable skills such as crime investigation and evidence collection during their tour in Iraq.

“By evaluating different aspects of the IPs, we can identify future training options and help the Iraqi Security Forces become stronger against threats like VBIEDS,” Burgos said.

Within 30 seconds of the mock

explosion, the IPs arrived to the scene and began detective-type work - dusting for fingerprints, questioning witnesses and collecting any remaining evidence.

“Overall, I think they did a good job,” said Sgt. Timothy Miller, a military police officer with HHC, BSTB, 4th AAB, 3rd Inf. Div., and Bridgeton, N.J., native. “They came in and reacted quickly.”

This was the first exercise of its kind for the Ramadi Urban District Headquarters IPs who invited their

sister stations to attend.

Miller said his team plans to host similar incident response exercises for the other local police stations. “We also are planning to conduct training on kidnapping and assassinations,” he said, “other threats in the Ramadi area.”

Lt. Col. Hashim Ahmed Hamid, training officer with Ramadi Urban District Headquarters police station, said he was grateful for the training experience and requested more training from the MPs.

“We know the U.S. military trains and trains and trains until they get it right,” said Hamid. “And we plan to do the same. I am confident there will be fewer mistakes next time. It was a very effective training tool.”

Burgos said the training was twofold, an opportunity for the ISF to excel and an opportunity for him to do something meaningful.

“It makes me feel good to know I am making a difference for the Iraqi people,” he said.

*LEFT: Iraqi Police rush to a simulated crime scene Nov. 30 during an incident response exercise hosted by U.S. Soldiers with 4-3 BSTB, 4th AAB, 3rd ID. CENTER: An Iraqi Police collects fingerprints from a simulated crime scene Nov. 30, as part of an incident response exercise at the Ramadi Urban District Police Station. RIGHT: Sgt. Timothy Miller, a military police officer with HHC, 4-3 BSTB, 4th AAB, 3rd ID, and Bridgeton, N.J., native, evaluates Iraqi Police officers who are participating in an incident response exercise Nov. 30 in Ramadi, Iraq. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)*



*LEFT: An Iraqi Police officer questions an “eye witness” of a mock vehicle-borne improvised explosive attack Nov. 30 during an incident response exercise at the Ramadi Urban District Police Station.*

*CENTER: An Iraqi Policeman cordons off a simulated crime scene Nov. 30 during an incident response exercise at the Ramadi Urban District Police Station.*

*RIGHT: Iraqi Police pull security after a mock vehicle-borne improvised explosive attack Nov. 30 during an incident response exercise at the Ramadi Urban District Police Station.*





U.S. Army medics have been teaching life-saving skills to their Iraqi Security Force counterparts as part of their advise-and-assist mission under Operation New Dawn. Now these military doctors are extending their expertise into the delivery room.

## Vanguard Brigade Soldiers teach Iraqi nurses infant resuscitation strategies

Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas  
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

During a two-day class, Soldiers assigned to the United States Division-Center, taught approximately 20 Iraqi nurses and midwives neonatal resuscitation techniques at the Al Anbar Provincial Government Center, Nov. 28-29.

"Iraq has a high birth rate, but also a high infant mortality rate and this training will help," said Lt. Col. Vincent Barnhart, 1st Armored Division surgeon and lead instructor of the class.

Through lectures and hands-on practical exercises, the Army doctors taught the Iraqi nurses basic steps of handling an infant after birth and the appropriate interventions to take if the baby does not respond the way it should.

"Initial medical care after the first few minutes a baby is born is crucial," said Capt. Baruch Zobrist, a physician assistant with the Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division.

"Statistically, nine out of every 10 babies are born healthy births, and the one percent of infants who

experience problems can usually be cared for through proper ventilation."

The medics introduced positive pressure ventilation with a bag-valve mask to the nurses who said they typically use antibiotics to treat non-responsive infants.

"The bag-valve mask is a piece of equipment that they don't normally use," said Capt. John Pillen, physician assistant with the 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th AAB. "That was something that was new to them - a new skill, a new idea. They were a little bit hesitant at first to accept it, because it was new, but I think they've come to embrace it and are excited to take it back home to their communities and use it to improve the lives of infants."

Each of the attendees was provided with a training kit

and an actual delivery room kit donated by a United States non-government organization. The training kits include a stethoscope, bulb suction device, bag-valve mask, towels and a baby mannequin.

*Continued next page*



ABOVE: Lt. Col. Vincent Barnhart, 1st Armored Division surgeon shows 20 Iraqi nurses and midwives how to apply positive pressure ventilation with a bag valve mask, during a neonatal resuscitation class at the Anbar Provincial Government Center, Nov. 29. Also pictured are instructor-doctors: Capt. Baruch Zobrist, 4-3 BSTB, 4th AAB; Adel Hansen, United States Forces-Iraq medical advisor and Capt. Joseph Roarty, 4th AAB surgeon. LEFT: Capt. John Pillen, physician assistant with 1-76 FA, 4th AAB, teaches an Iraqi nurse neonatal resuscitation techniques during a class held at the Anbar Provincial Government Center, Nov. 29. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)





Approximately 20 Iraqi nurses and midwives take a post-test to assess what they've learned about neonatal resuscitation tactics during a two-day course held at the Anbar Provincial Government Center, Nov. 28-29.

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"They now have all the tools they need," assured Barnhart, who encouraged the nurses to teach others in their community their new-learned skills and increase the odds of saving lives.

Osama Abdulrahman, Al Anbar director of health, said that the neonatal resuscitation training now serves as the nucleus for future medical training in the province.

"Depending on the outcome of this 'train-the-trainer,' we will establish a second workshop and invite more attendees to do this again," he said, adding that the Americans and Iraqis have worked hard to host this course. "These students have made me proud and I hope that this will continue."

One of the students, and nurse of 29 years, said that the neonatal class was very beneficial.

"Before this class, I needed to see a doctor when a baby stopped breathing," she said, "but now I feel confident that I can handle any baby (experiencing birth complications) on my own."

The self confidence and the success of the students has given a greater sense of accomplishment to Pillen.

"I really appreciated working with them," he said. "They surprised me at how much they embraced the training, how enthusiastic they were, how strong their participation was and how interested they were in the material."

"They were really involved and wanted to learn," Pillen continued. "I think this is one of the most significant things I've done here in Iraq, and I really appreciate the opportunity to take part in this training."

# Soldiers support start of new school

*3-7 Infantry attends ground-breaking ceremony in Hit*

**Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas**  
**4/3 AAB Public Affairs**

**HIT, Iraq** - School officials and city council members of Hit, are now digging into a brighter future for hundreds of Iraqi children. A ground-breaking ceremony, Nov. 22, officially marked the start of a new project to refurbish the Dar Al Salaam elementary school, the city's largest youth education facility.

"This is a great day for the people of Hit," said Capt. Devin Hammond, commander of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, who was on hand to support the city's milestone.

Hammond said that the Provincial Reconstruction Team of Al Anbar, Iraq has partnered with Hit city officials to complete the school renovation project by Jan. 4, 2011. The goal of the PRT is to empower the local Government of Iraq, help accelerate the transition to Iraqi self-reliance, and, in this case, to provide the children of Iraq with a better environment to further their education.

The school stands in great need of reconstruction, said 2nd Lt. Hertier Diakaban, platoon leader with Co. B, 3/7 Inf. "The roof tops and bathrooms are pretty bad," he said. "The first priority of the PRT project is to renovate those areas."

Diakaban, Hammond and other Soldiers assigned to Co. B, 3/7

Inf., watched as the Dar Al Salaam school principal turned a golden shovel into the soil in front of the school grounds, initiating the first step toward project completion.

After the ceremony, city council officials handed out book bags and school supplies to 15 orphaned children who attend the elementary school.

Mohamed Mohammed, head of Hit's Security Council, invited the U.S. Soldiers back to celebrate the school's re-grand opening at formal ribbon cutting ceremony once school renovations are complete.

"Our house is your house," he said to the Soldiers.

Refurbishing Dar Al Salaam is but one of many projects for PRT-Anbar. Contractors are also planning to renovate a court house in the city of Hit by early next year.



**ABOVE:** The principal of Dar Al Salaam Elementary School 'breaks ground' and officially denotes the beginning of a Provincial Reconstruction Team school renovation project in Hit, Nov. 22.

**TOP LEFT:** Abdul Aziz Namaan, head of Hit education committee, signs a certificate initiating the start of school renovations, Nov. 22, as Capt. Devin Hammond, commander of Co. B, 3-7 Inf., looks on.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Students attend Dar Al Salaam's ground-breaking ceremony for renovations, Nov. 22. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)



1: Pfc. Jonathan Mount, an infantryman assigned to Company D, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, and an Iraqi police officer hand out books to children of Tash, Iraq, Dec. 4. Mount, a native of Las Vegas, Nev., received candy, books and toys from a hometown charity to distribute at the combined humanitarian assistance mission. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas) 2: Staff Sgt. Darren Brown, with Company A, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, reads to children at during a combined humanitarian assistance mission with Iraqi Security Forces, Nov. 10. (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman) 3: Capt. Matthew Martinson, commander of Company A, 3-15 Inf. Regt., hands over food supplies to an Iraqi mayor to distribute to those in need, Nov. 10 . (Photo by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)



# *’Tis the season* **Vanguard Soldiers reach out to Iraqi community**



4: An Iraqi child sits proudly with her new bookbag she received when Iraqi Army Soldiers and Soldiers assigned to Co. A, 3-7 Inf. Regt., arrived at her elementary school Nov. 10 . (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)



5: Soldiers with Company A, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, unload medical supplies to distribute during a combined medical engagement with Iraqi Security Forces, Nov. 13. (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)

6: Iraqi school children show off their new backpacks they received from members of the 8th Iraqi Army Brigade Dec. 15. Soldiers with Company A, 3-7 Inf. Regt. supported the Iraqi Army-led humanitarian assistance mission held in Fal-lujah, Iraq. (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)





Wounded warriors received certificates of appreciation, a small token of gratitude for their service and sacrifice, at a ceremony hosted by 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division in their honor Dec. 10 at Camp Ramadi, Iraq. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)

# Wounded Warriors return

## War heroes find closure in Al Anbar, Iraq

Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas  
4/3 AAB Public Affairs

**E**ight service members returned to Iraq—a place where they nearly lost their lives—and were welcomed back Dec. 10 by Soldiers with the 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, upon their visit to Al Anbar, Iraq.

“Operation Proper Exit” allows wounded warriors to revisit the country they were once medically evacuated from, to find closure to a chapter of their lives that has since remained open.

“In making this journey I hope each of you gain a perspective

from this chapter of your life and these experiences will assist you in writing the next,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Altman, command sergeant major of 4th AAB, 3rd Inf. Div., as he spoke to the wounded heroes at Camp Ramadi.

The warriors—six Soldiers, a Marine, and one Airman—returned to Iraq, Dec. 6, and spent a week travelling throughout the country they involuntarily left.

Marine Corporal Michael Campbell, a Pineville, La., native, deployed to Fallujah in March 2003, with the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment. Two months later, he was severely wounded when an improvised explosive

device detonated and left him with Traumatic Brain Injury, chronic seizures, loss of short-term memory, loss of speech for two years, but most importantly, the loss of his fellow comrades who were killed in the blast.

“I wanted to come back here, where I was injured, to say goodbye to my friends,” he said.

Campbell said this visit back to the province he left more than seven years ago would help with his healing process and allow him to mentally move forward from the tragedies of war.

A little more than a year after Campbell was injured, Sfc. Derek Bradshaw, a Yucca Valley, Calif.,

native, deployed to Kirkuk with the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. While out on patrol, his vehicle rolled off a 20-foot cliff, killing the driver, Sfc. Daniel McConnell, and leaving Bradshaw and the other passengers disabled.

“They didn’t think I was going to make it,” Bradshaw said, recalling the Nov. 16, 2004 incident that left him with TBI, multiple face fractures, a broken arm and nerve damage.

Bradshaw heard about Operation Proper Exit through his battle buddy, Sfc. Carlos Ortiz, 1st Bat., 27th Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 25th Inf. Div., and a Seaside Heights, N.J., native, who also almost plummeted to his death in the same roll-over accident.

“Ortiz told me about this opportunity to come back and without hesitation I jumped onboard,” Bradshaw said. “It gives Soldiers like me a chance to return, talk to the other Soldiers who are currently deployed, and gives us a chance to leave—this time, on our own two feet.”

Bradshaw, Ortiz, Campbell and the other wounded warriors, met with 4th AAB, 3rd Inf. Div. Soldiers and discussed the days that nearly claimed their lives.

“This is allowing us to get closure a lot of us need,” Bradshaw said. “Most of this closure comes from talking one-on-one with the Soldiers—people we can relate to—and it really helps.”

The wounded warriors agreed a little small talk with their brothers and sisters-in-arms helped them cope, and said it was good to see their personal sacrifices helped to make a difference for the people of America and Iraq.

“It’s awesome to see how much the Iraqi forces have grown in confidence and in numbers,” Bradshaw said. “It’s phenomenal to be able to come back and see this first-hand.”

Sergeant 1st Class Joe James, a Bethpage, Tenn., native, and returning wounded warrior agrees. “It’s only been a few years, but I feel like Iraq is a completely different place,” he said of the improvements he has seen since he last left.

James, who has deployed to combat four times, was wounded in 2008 when an IED hit his Humvee, killing one and wounding him and two oth-



Sfc. Derek Bradshaw (right), who deployed to Kirkuk with the 1-27 Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 25th ID, shows Sfc. Todd Davis (center), with Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th AAB some of his injuries he sustained Nov. 16, 2004 when his humvee plummeted off a 20-foot cliff.

ers. He said it was nice to see the combat roles have finally shifted to advise and assist.

“Iraq today is nothing like it was in 2005 and 2006, and that’s because of you,” Altman told James and the rest of the wounded warriors. “Our Soldiers are safer, more secure and are able to advise and assist the Iraqis, due to your hard work and sacrifice.”

Altman and Command Sgt. Maj. William Johnson, command sergeant major with 1st Armored Division, handed each of the warriors a certificate of appreciation as a small token of their gratitude toward the heroes who have helped pave the way for other service members and the Government of Iraq, today.

“Whether you realize it or not, each of you are truly an inspiration,” Altman said to the warriors. “To return to a place where you nearly lost your lives takes courage and gives me direct insight into the type of servicemen you were and veterans you are as you are still committed to serving our country.”



A Soldier sits with Master Sgt. Tom Carpenter, a Hastings, Mich., native, who was wounded May 10, 2005 and lost parts of both legs in an explosion. Carpenter talked with Soldiers with 4th AAB, 3rd ID, during his return to Iraq, as part of Operation Proper Exit Dec. 10 at Camp Ramadi.





*ABOVE: Soldiers with the 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, share a Thanksgiving meal, Nov. 25 at Camp Fal-lujah, Iraq. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)*

# Home away from home

## Deployed Troops share Thanksgiving feast with Army Family



*ABOVE: Leaders with 4th AAB prepare to serve a Thanksgiving meal, Nov. 25, to Soldiers at Camp Ramadi, Iraq. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)*



*ABOVE: A Soldier with Co. D, 3-7 Inf. digs into a meal fit for a king Nov. 25 at Camp Khalid, Iraq. (Photo by Capt. Tiffany M. Collins)*  
*LEFT: 1st Sgt. Chad Touchet, Company A, 3-7 Inf. (left) serves Soldiers a Thanksgiving meal, Nov. 25, at Camp T.Q., Iraq. (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)*

# Mustangs celebrate Thanksgiving together

**Spc. Terence Ewings**  
**4th AAB, 1st Cav. Public Affairs**

Approximately 80 U.S. and Iraqi Security Force Soldiers took a well-deserved break from their routine duties as a combined patrol base in northwest-ern Iraq, Nov. 25.

The deployed troops from 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, “broke bread” with one another during the Thanksgiving dinner, while reminiscing about all the things they are thankful for.

“We’ve all grown close working with the Iraqis out here,” said Pfc. Dadwin Privado, a 21-year-old mechanic and native of Silver Spring, Md.

“This is my first deployment and my ‘battle buddies’ are the closest thing I have to a Family out here.”

The Soldiers don’t seem to mind that they are located on one of the smallest joint compounds in northern Iraq. Although the base doesn’t have all the amenities that larger forward operating bases have, the Troops enjoyed all the turkey, ham, stuffing and other traditional foods that were flown in the day prior in preparation for the American holiday.

Spc. Robert Baker, a food specialist and native of Alexandria, La., and Spc. Sarah Bleything, a native of Middlebury, Ind., cooked the meal for their fellow service members in hopes of bringing a “little piece of home” to Iraq.

“Even though they are not at home eating around a big table with their Families, we wanted to be able to provide them good food, because events like this boost a Soldier’s morale,” Baker said.

After the food was cooked, leaders stationed at the joint compound served each one of their Soldiers the holiday meal and thanked them for their hard work and service here overseas.

“These Soldiers are the hardest working ones here and we want to make sure they are recognized and appreciated,” said Staff Sgt. Sheldon Wattley, the non-commissioned officer-in-charge of operations at the compound and Brooklyn, N.Y., native. “Seeing the Soldiers happy, and making them a priority lets them know how much we do care.”





*Pfc. Oh Young Kwon, with Co. C, 3-7 Inf. Regt. (top left), joins 50 service members in taking the Oath of Allegiance during a Veterans Day Naturalization Ceremony at Al Faw Palace at Camp Victory, Iraq. Kwon and four other Vanguard Brigade Soldiers became citizens, Nov. 11. (Photo by Lee Craker)*

# Vanguard Brigade Soldiers become **CITIZENS** on Veterans Day

**Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas**  
**4/3 AAB Public Affairs**

**T**hey hail from all over the world, but together, five Vanguard Brigade Soldiers share one common goal—to become American citizens.

Dreams became a reality for Privates 1st Class Oh Young Kwon, Jesus Moreta, Claudio Guana, Philip Reeves and Spc. Mubarak Musal - all assigned to the 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division - when they participated in a naturalization ceremony held at the Al Faw palace in Baghdad, Iraq, Nov. 11.

“Ever since I moved to the United States, this was my No. 1 goal—to be a citizen,” said Kwon, a 24-year-old Soldier with Company C, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th AAB, 3rd Inf. Div.

Kwon said he left Korea and moved to Virginia in 2004, and after graduating high school, worked with his father for two years.

“I realized that wasn’t what I really wanted to do,” he said. “I thought it would be fun to join the Army. The (Americans) helped us during the Korean War and I wanted to give back and help. (During the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom and beginning of New Dawn.) All of my buddies are citizens and I wanted to be a part of them.”

One of Kwon’s buddies and fellow Co. C Soldier, Moreta, shared the same goal.

“Everybody wants to live in the United States,” said Moreta, a 22-year-old Dominican Republic native. “Everywhere you go, you have to work hard, but it’s easier in the United

States because of the opportunities, the help you can get from the government and the agencies that can assist you with getting a good job. In my (native) country, it’s hard. There are not that many jobs available.”

Moreta moved to Massachusetts in 2006. He said joining the Army was something he always wanted to do.

“I always liked the Army,” he said. “Joining the Army was always on my mind. I only knew a little bit of English when I came here though. It took me two years to actually join the Army because my English was not that good.”

Moreta said through perseverance, he overcame his language barrier.

“I put in my mind that I’m going to do it,” Moreta said. “This was my dream, and I know that this country has helped me a lot.”

Gauna, with Company D, 3rd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt., and an Argentina native, and Reeves, a Liberia native with Co. B, 3rd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt., were equally enthusiastic about becoming American citizens.

“It’s an achievement that not everyone can get,” said Gauna, a 37-year-old infantryman. “I am proud to have made it.”

Reeves said the opportunity is a dream come true.

Musal, an interpreter with Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th AAB, and a 34-year-old Sudan native, said coming to America meant opportunity, and that gaining citizenship means he can finally call the United States his home.

“The United States is the place where everyone wants to be—because of freedom,” he said. “(There) you can live a better life.”





# Celebrating **Saint Barbara**

*Artillery Soldiers honor patron saint*

*From left: Lt. Col. Ryan LaPorte, commander of 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade; Sgt. Terry Murphy with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1-76 FA; 1st Sgt. Richard Rodriguez with Company G, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, attached to 1-76 FA; and 1-76 FA Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph Goodwater cut a cake to jump-start Saint Barbara's Day celebrations at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, Dec. 3.*

*Saint Barbara, the daughter of a wealthy aristocrat was tortured and executed after her father discovered she had converted to Christianity. Legend has it that after her father executed her, he was struck down by lightning in divine retribution. Because of this, she was soon regarded as the patron saint in time of danger from thunderstorms, fires and sudden death. She became the patron saint of artillerymen from early on in the development of artillery weaponry as early cannons were unreliable, and at times would explode wounding and killing their crews. Saint Barbara was invoked by these early cannoners in the hope she would protect them from this fate.*

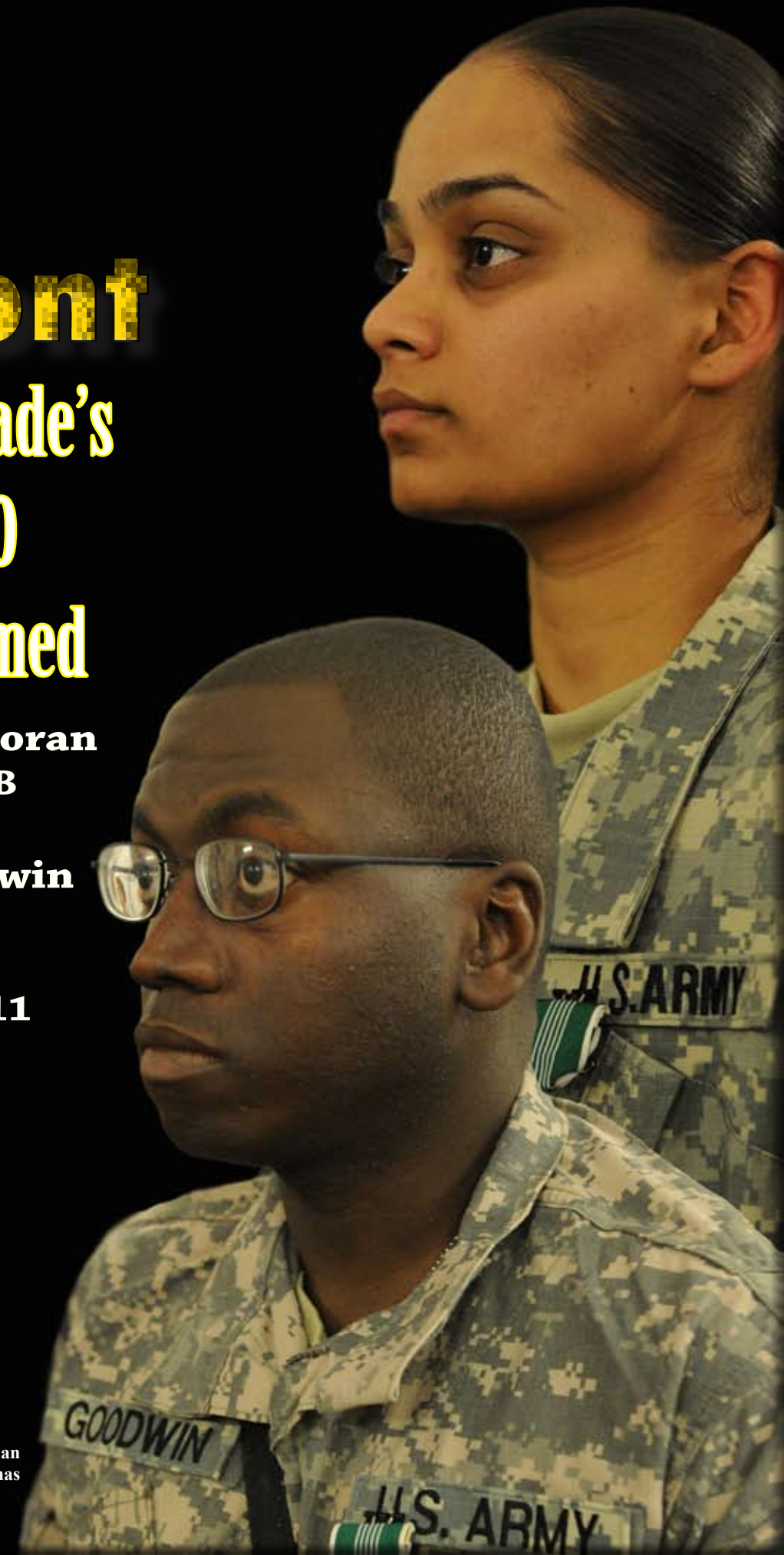
*Artillery Soldiers traditionally celebrate St. Barbara with a formal dining-in or military ball. Patriot Soldiers with 1-76 FA took time out to continue this annual tradition despite being deployed in support of Operation New Dawn. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)*

## **Out Front** **Vanguard Brigade's** **Soldier, NCO** **of Quarter named**

**Sgt. Kareshma Pooran**  
**HHC, 703rd BSB**

**Spc. Julius Goodwin**  
**HHB, 1-76 FA**

**1st Quarter FY 11**



Photos by Spc. Gary Silverman  
Graphic Illustration by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas



# DESERT SAFETY

**Anthony Woodard**  
4/3 AAB Safety Officer

As the weather changes are coming, we need to ensure our vehicle and equipment operators are aware that many mission risk assessments will change requiring a potential change in mitigation processes and procedures. When the road surface becomes slick - reducing surface friction, increasing braking and stopping distances, and increasing turn radius - vehicle speed considerations should become a focus.

Your health-care professionals are ready to treat seasonal illnesses. Please make a point to discuss the risks of self-treatment with over-the-counter medications and the effects some medicines have on performance while operating equipment, or when engaged in occupational duties. Illness often affects the rest cycles, and early onset of fatigue has caused accidents.

Also note, in theater experts are still expecting electrical cause fires from shorts with fluorescent lighting and ballasts. We need to ensure that the appropriate watt lamp is used in overhead lighting fixtures. Lamps exceeding watt capacity of the light fixture invites disaster.

Finally, many changes are taking place during Operation New Dawn. In November, the theater has experienced an “up-tick” in the number of negligent discharges. Several root-cause analyses suggests most unintended weapon firings occurred because of individual failure to follow weapons clearing procedures. As you move among your organizations, please include discussions related to prevention of these dangerous events.

As we continue our mission as an Advise and Assist Brigade, we must also continue to guard against needless accidents.

## Christmas in Iraq



**TOP:** *Spc. Chad Booth, chaplain assistant with the 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, hands out Christmas cards to Soldiers during lunch at the Camp Ramadi dining facility, Dec. 25. (Photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)*

**CENTER:** *Soldiers assigned to the 4th Advise and Assist Brigade sing holiday songs during a candlelight Christmas Eve service at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, Dec. 24. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)*

**BOTTOM:** *Col. Lou Lartigue and Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Altman, 4/3 AAB command team, provide a few remarks during a tree lighting ceremony, Dec. 21. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)*

*First Lt. Richard Wright, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, attends a candle-light Christmas service at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, Dec. 24. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)*

## Chaplain's Corner

**Chaplain (Maj.) Dave Cromeenes**  
4/3 AAB Chaplain

We celebrated the holidays by putting up a Christmas tree in the chapel. We've enjoyed multiple versions of Christmas services and conducted holiday parties in and around our unit areas; including a Palm tree lighting in front of the Camp Ramadi Post Exchange. It was not the same as being home with Family and friends, but we made intentional efforts to enjoy each other's company.

The holiday season reminds us how important being peaceful can be. Thinking about the birth of a Savior, celebration of thanksgiving and remembrance of being loved will help sustain and support the weight of being apart. Be thankful and thoughtful of the importance genuine faith and the love of Family can be for peace and satisfaction.

One of the most important aspects of maintaining high morale is knowing you enjoyed the season and embraced Family traditions or shared joyful moments with other Families.

Our Vanguard chaplains and chaplain assistants worked especially hard to create memorable moments for the Soldiers and civilians here in Al Anbar, Iraq. It's a continuous honor to serve alongside you and your Soldier.

Play hard, pray harder. God bless the Families of Vanguard!



# Family Readiness

Traci Wheeler  
Vanguard Family Readiness Support Assistant

Hello again to all of our Soldiers, Family Members and Friends of the Vanguard Brigade!

I want to take a minute to thank all of our volunteers around the globe who have taken time from their busy schedules to give to our Soldiers. It is the dedication and the commitment that you demonstrate every day that enables our Soldiers to complete their missions in Iraq. Without your love and support, most of our programs and events would not exist. Thank you for everything!

As we enter a new year, please take the time to meet your Family Readiness Group representatives. These fabulous people are here for you. Remember, our mission is to keep you all informed throughout the

deployment. If you have a change to your address or telephone number, please update your FRG Leader. We want to continue to keep you connected to current and upcoming events. If you are ever in need of assistance, or you are not receiving information from the unit, please contact your battalion or squadron FRSA immediately.

Also, join us at the Vanguard Town Hall at the Main Post Chapel, 6:30 p.m., Jan. 24. This event will be an open forum, a chance to speak with rear-detachment personnel on any current deployment issues or concerns. Limited childcare will be provided on site by Child Youth School Services' certified baby sitters; reservations must be submitted to your FRSA. We will also tape Valentine's Day messages for our Soldiers. Thank you again for your continuing support. Enjoy the New Year!

## Spouses Soldier-up for friendly competition



Approximately 100 spouses of deployed Vanguard Brigade Soldiers begin a two-mile run, kicking off the brigade's second Combat Spouse Badge Competition, Nov. 6, at Fort Stewart, Ga. (Photo by Sgt. Robert Schaffner)

### FRG contacts

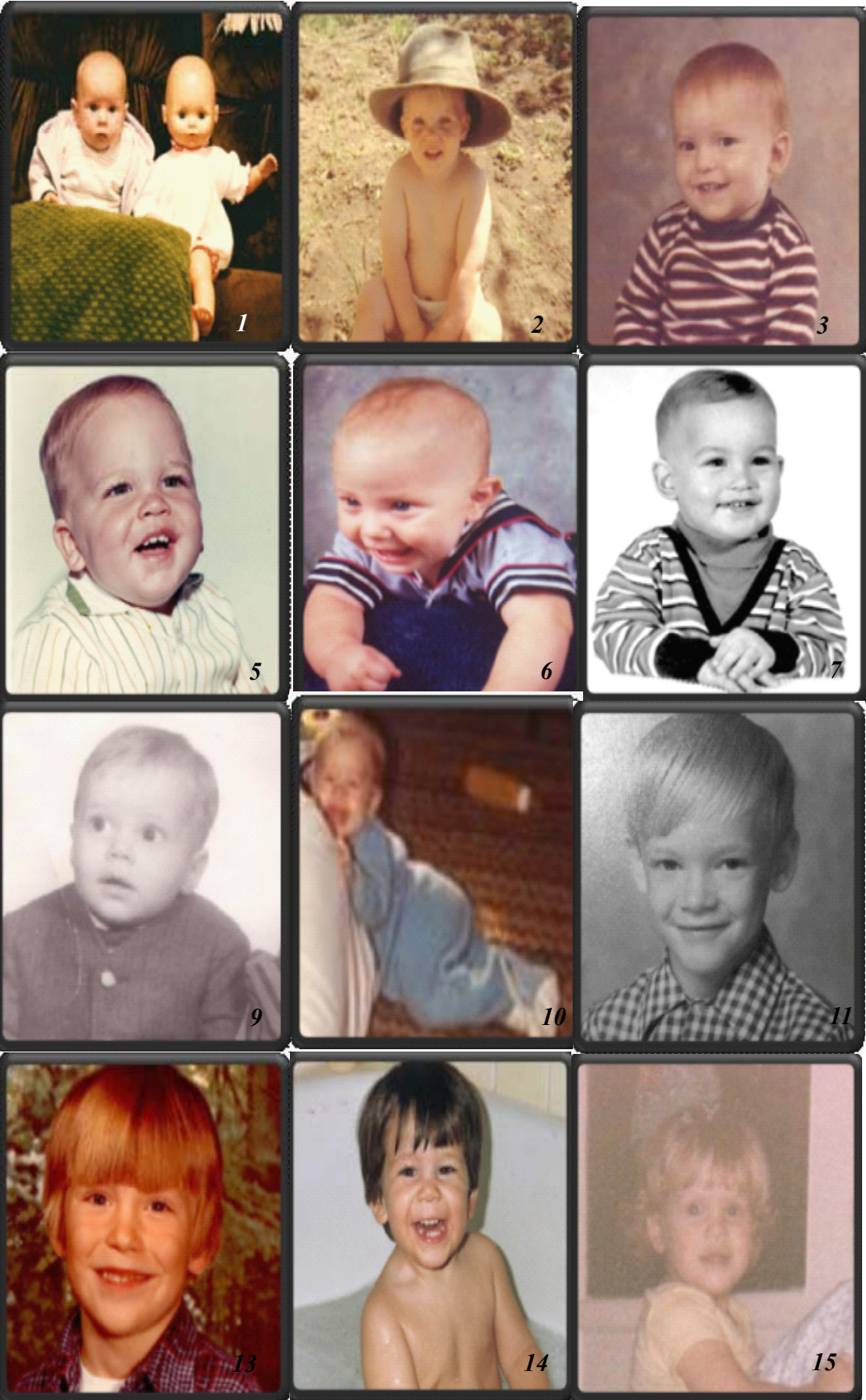
3-7 Infantry	SSG Richard Buckholz	767-9236/0742	1-76 FA	Kimberly Walker	767-4304
3-15 Infantry	Johnny Robinson	767-7498	4-3 BSTB	Christi Kisko	767-5370
6-8 Cavalry	Lisa Partington	767-0143	703rd BSB	Talesha Nelson	767-8853
			4 IBCT FRSA	Traci Wheeler	767-9310/271-9962

Answers: (1) 1st Lt. Emily Urban, HHB, 1-76 FA (2) Lt. Col. Carl Bergmann, 4th AAB executive officer (3) Capt. Brian Payne, HHC, 4th AAB (4) Maj. James Booth, HHC, 4-3 BSTB (5) Capt. Garrick Worst, HHC, 4th AAB commander (6) Spc. John Morris, Co. B, 3-7 Inf. (7) Col. Lou Lartigue, 4th AAB commander (8) Staff Sgt. Esaa Rahmaan, HHC, 4-3 BSTB (9) Lt. Col. Eddie Gillon, 703rd BSB commander (10) Sgt. Chad Cousineau, Co. F, 703rd BSB (11) Lt. Col. Buddy Houston, 4th AAB deputy commander (12) Staff Sgt. Gary Bacus, Co. F, 703rd BSB (13) Maj. Yancey Zinkon, HHC, 4th AAB (14) Spc. Jeremy Burmeister, Co. B, 3-7 Inf. (15) Spc. Garrett Golden, Co. B, 3-7 Inf.

## Blast from the past

### Can you guess who I am?

Photos provided by  
Traci Wheeler  
4th AAB FRSA







*Soldiers assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, play a friendly game of “football” with their Iraqi Army counterparts of the 1st Quick Reaction Force Brigade, 1st IA Div., at Camp Ali, Nov. 10. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)*

Check out the  
Vanguard Brigade  
on the Web

Log on to  
[www.stewart.army.mil/4thBrigade](http://www.stewart.army.mil/4thBrigade)  
[www.facebook.com/4th-Brigade-3rd-Infantry-Division](http://www.facebook.com/4th-Brigade-3rd-Infantry-Division)