

# THE *Ivy* U.S. DIVISION-NORTH LEAF



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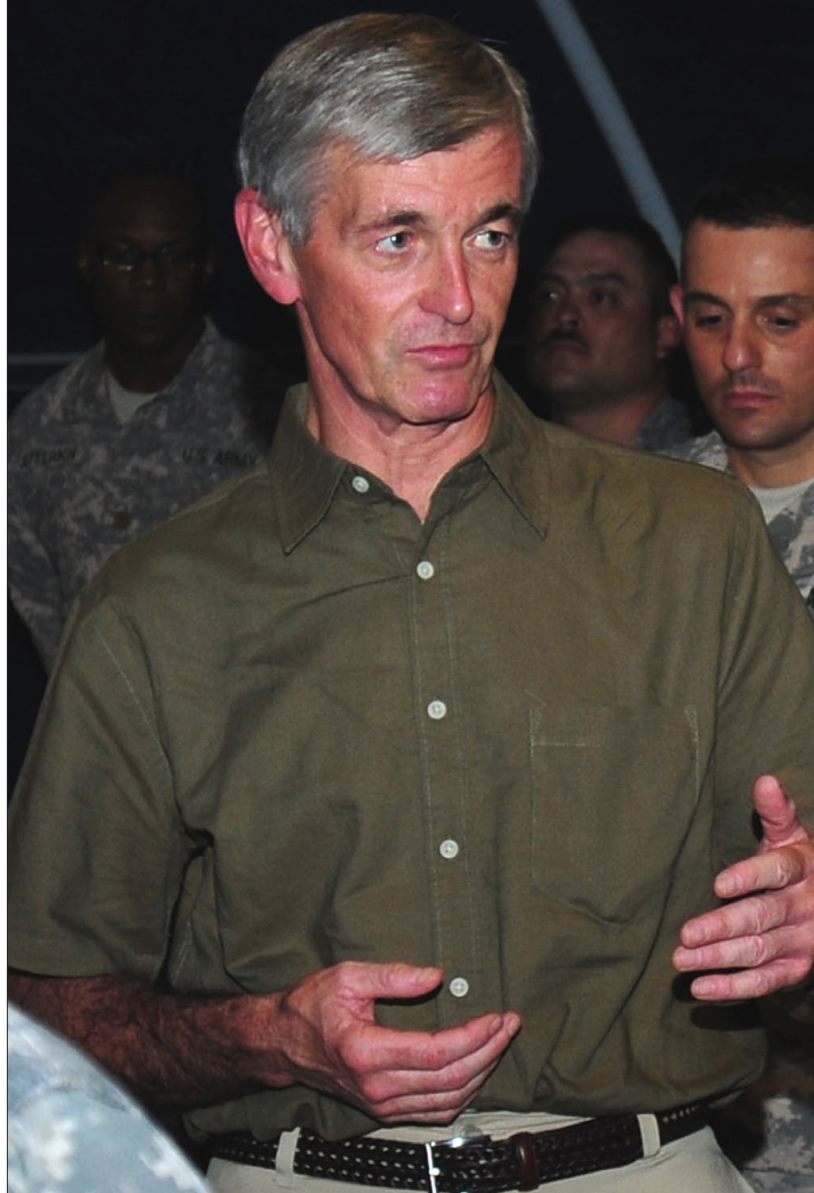


ESTABLISHED IN 1917 TO HONOR THOSE WHO SERVE



SEPTEMBER 16, 2011

## Secretary of the Army



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, USD-N Public Affairs

**Secretary of the Army, the Honorable John McHugh, speaks with Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, during a brief visit to Contingency Operating Base Warhorse, Sept. 14, 2011. "This is the greatest land fighting force the world has ever seen ... and it is our responsibility with whatever resources we are given to do the best job we can to preserve it," said McHugh, who served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, from New York, from January 1993 to September 2009.**

# McHugh visits troops

Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams  
USD-N Public Affairs

Secretary of the Army, the Honorable John McHugh, commended Soldiers of U.S. Division – North during a brief visit to Contingency Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq, Sept. 14.

Responsible for every aspect of the U.S. Army, from manpower and equipment to the Army's fiscal budget, McHugh met with Soldiers of 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, to express his appreciation for their service while deployed in support of Operation New Dawn.

McHugh pledged his support to the Soldiers and assured them the U.S. stands ready to provide the resources necessary to accomplish the mission.

"I urge you to stay attentive to your mission," McHugh told the "Mustang" troops of 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, "and again, we deeply appreciate all that you do."

The 21st Secretary of the Army used the opportunity "to spend a little time with the Soldiers and hear what's on their minds," prior to a meeting with USD-N leaders to discuss efforts in preparation for U.S. forces' withdrawal from Iraq at the end of 2011.

Before opening the floor to Soldiers for an informal question and answer session, McHugh addressed the current budget deliberations in the nation's capital.

"This is a time of some uncertainty, not just here in Iraq, but back home as well," McHugh said.

**See MCHUGH, Pg. 3**

STEADFAST AND LOYAL  
IRONHORSE  
HIGHLANDER  
DEVIL  
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BLACK JACK

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# IRONHORSE STRONG:

## Soldier of the Week

**STAFF SGT.  
JAMES  
CHEATHAM**

Working at a high level and doing it with ease is what sets Staff Sgt. James Cheatham apart from other Soldiers.

Cheatham, platoon sergeant for Troop A, 6th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment is responsible for the all scheduled and unscheduled maintenance on a troop of OH-58D Kiowa Warrior reconnaissance/attack helicopters.

The Houston native is serving as the only platoon sergeant for a flight troop of Kiowas while his 1st Platoon counterpart is on environmental morale leave.

"He is not only doing the job of a sergeant first class, but he is doing the job of two," said 1st Sgt. Alex Woodell, first sergeant of Troop A.

Cheatham's professionalism and extensive knowledge base serves as an example of excellence for two platoons of crew chiefs.

Under Cheatham's dedicated oversight and valued leadership, Troop A supplied six aircraft daily in support of Scout Weapon

Teams' missions, including numerous missions around Contingency Operating Base Warrior in support of 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – North, with a 100 percent mission success rate.

"If any aircraft has something break, he is the first line of defense to identify the problem and set forth what procedures need to be done to return the aircraft to a flyable status," Woodell says.

Cheatham's tireless work ethic and expert knowledge directly affected the mission productivity and success of United States Forces – Iraq and Iraqi Security Forces.

"(Cheatham) insists on training two levels down so his junior Soldiers will be ready when the time comes," Woodell said. "This not only prepares these Soldiers for this deployment, but sets the foundation for the next generation of aviation maintenance leaders."

He exemplifies what it means to be a



crew chief, cavalryman and trooper.

For his dedication to the mission, Cheatham is this week's "Ironhorse Strong" Soldier of the Week.

For more "Ironhorse Strong" Soldier of the Week features from past editions of The Ivy Leaf, go to the Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System website:

[www.dvidshub.net](http://www.dvidshub.net)

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## THE IVY LEAF

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## TASK FORCE IRONHORSE

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**1st Advise and  
Assist Task Force  
1st Infantry Division**

**2nd Advise and  
Assist Brigade  
1st Cavalry Division**

**4th Advise and  
Assist Brigade  
1st Armored Division**



**MCHUGH Cont'd from Pg. 1**

"Budget challenges – I can't tell you to the extent at this point, but obviously it's going to have some effect, perhaps some significant effect, on the military and obviously on the Army."

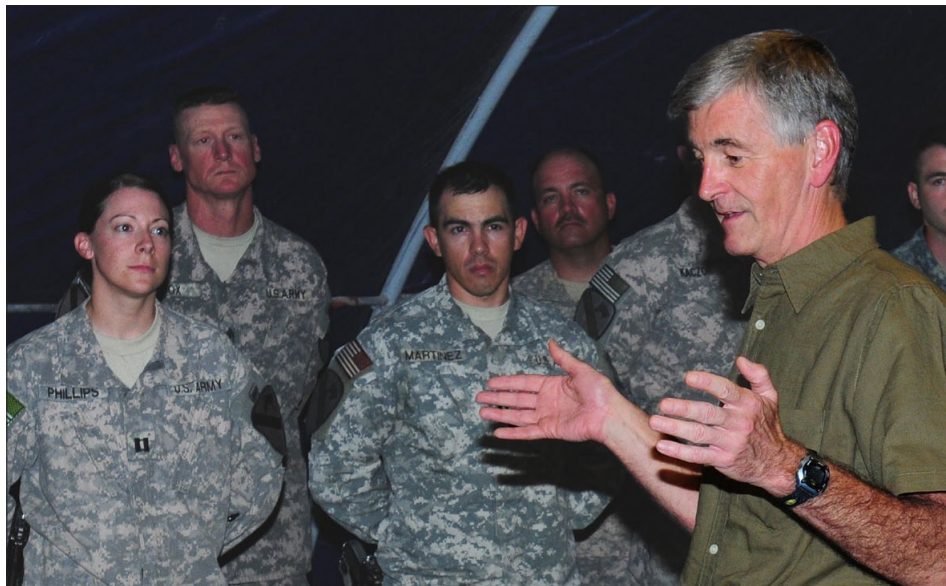
McHugh also assured the troops that he and the Army's newest Chief of Staff, Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, have the Soldiers' best interest at heart and remain committed to the Army and its mission.

"We're working hard with the new Secretary of Defense to ensure that we are taking care of our people and their families, and keeping our moral and legal commitments to all of you," he explained, "so that even in this time of changing fiscal realities, we maintain the kind of Army all of us are proud of ... no matter what the fiscal resources."

McHugh, who served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, representing the state of New York from January 1993 to September 2009, answered questions about how budget cuts will affect manning, operations and services across the Army.

Captain Thomas Spolizino, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Sqdn., 8th Cav. Regt., asked how the budget being reduced over the next 10 years would affect troop readiness, manpower and advancement opportunities.

"I think we are going to get smaller," the Secretary of the Army told his audience. "That has happened infrequently in every post-war era you can name, but what the (Chief of Staff of the Army) and I are focused on is doing it right."



U.S. Army photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, USD-N Public Affairs

**Visiting with Soldiers at Contingency Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq, Secretary of the Army, the Honorable John McHugh, answers questions Sept. 14, 2011, about the effects of proposed budget cuts to the Department of Defense's military budget over the next 10 years.**

McHugh explained that the Army has had more than a year to begin preparing for the budget cuts and plan on doing "more with less."

"There are obvious ways in which we can control the size of the military that doesn't affect people who are currently in uniform, such as accessions ...," he said, "but to keep it balanced across the various ranks we may have to change the promotion rates in some of the officer grades and enlistment grades."

"I wish we could give you numbers, but I assure you, we are looking and asking the same kind of questions you are," he said.

McHugh explained to Spolizino and the Soldiers gathered before him that senior

military leaders do not know exactly how a reduced budget will affect the organization, and are conducting Total Army Analysis to answer the questions.

"I would rather have a smaller, supremely equipped, trained and cared for force than, as we've had in the past, a force that is really big, but doesn't have anything behind it," he said.

Spolizino, an armor officer who hails from Colonia, N.J., said he is satisfied by the Secretary of the Army's candid answers and appreciated the visit from the Army's most senior civilian leader.

"It's important, because it shows there is still emphasis on what we are doing," Spolizino said. "The way everything is going lately, it can seem like we are forgotten a little bit, and his visit shows us that the Army and our senior leaders are still focused on Iraq and making sure the mission is completed properly, completed responsibly."

"It's a different deployment than we ever had before; it's certainly a hard mission, but the Soldiers are doing it well," he said. "We removed a dictator, and then established a government that can take care of itself in an unstable region, take care of its own people, and be a reliable partner for the U.S."

Before departing COB Warhorse, McHugh assured the Soldiers, "This is the greatest land fighting force the world has ever seen ... and it is our responsibility with whatever resources we are given to do the best job we can to preserve it."



**Col. John Peeler, commander of 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, describes some of the features and benefits of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle to McHugh during his visit with "Black Jack" troopers at COB Warhorse.**

# Highlanders hold 9/11 remembrance dinner

Spc. Brandon A. Bednarek  
4th AAB Public Affairs  
1st Armored Div., USD - N

On a sunny Tuesday morning in 2001, the perception of time seemed to have froze in place as hijacked passenger jets crashed into the World Trade Center, Pentagon and a field near Shanksville, Pa. The world watched in awe as the attack, much like Pearl Harbor, brought the United States into one of its darkest hours in history.

However, under the cloud of dust and debris, a wave of unity and patriotism surged through the American people, raising their spirits and lifting the nation up from underneath the ashes of terror.

As Americans took a moment to recognize the 10th anniversary of that infamous day, they were joined by Soldiers from 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Armored Division, who are currently deployed to Contingency Operating Site Marez, Iraq.

The "Highlanders" held a special memorial dinner Sept. 11 at the Marez dining facility to share Soldiers' experiences and remember the events that took place a decade ago.

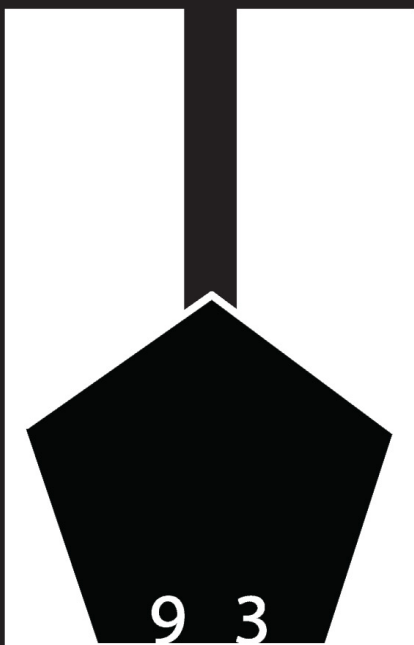
With place cards lining rows of neighboring tables, Soldiers in attendance represented each of the 50 states to express the unity shared by Americans in the wake of disaster.

"This is a time of remembrance and prayer," said Col. Scott McKean, brigade commander and San Jose, Calif. native. "Although it was a tragic time for our country, it was also a time that our country came together and made us stronger."

Regardless of profession, color, gender, or wealth, everyone came together and bonded to show America's resilience, said McKean.

Sitting among those in attendance was a Soldier who was called to action on that tragic day.

"9/11 started for me when I was a (private first class)," said Staff Sgt. Shawn C. Gourdine, a military police officer with the 105th Military Police Company from Buffalo, N.Y.







U.S. Army photos by Spc. Brandon A. Bednarek, 4th AAB, 1st Armored Division  
Soldiers with 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Armored Division, attend a memorial dinner, Sept. 11, 2011, at the Contingency Operating Site Marez, Iraq, dining facility to observe the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center.



Colonel Scott McKean, commander, 4th AAB, 1st Armored Div., cuts an American flag cake with a "Highlander" sword during the memorial dinner.



Staff Sergeant Matthew Hoover, a military policeman with Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 4th Special Troops Battalion, 4th AAB, 1st Armored Div., recalls where he was and how he felt during the World Trade Center attacks.

"My first memory of 9/11 was seeing the glow, at night-time, of the towers burning," Gourdine said.

Within hours of the attack, civilians, federal agents, law enforcement, and volunteers were at the scene to help in a time of crisis, he said.

Gourdine and his unit were responsible for maintaining order and providing security for those who were working at Ground Zero. "9/11 changed everyone's lives," he said.

Several other Soldiers also took a moment to share where they were at the time of the attacks, with responses ranging from actively serving on a military installation to sitting in a classroom as an elementary school 4th grader.

"Whether you think you're making a difference or not – you are," McKean told Soldiers. "You should be proud of everything that you do. Not everyone has the courage to do what you're doing."



Staff Sergeant Shawn C. Gourdine, a national guardsman with the 105th Military Police Co. from New York, shares his experience from September 11, 2001. Gourdine was a private first class charged with providing security for emergency personnel at Ground Zero.

# Wounded Warrior continues to serve

## Soldier shot in eye by sniper reflects on attack

Spc. Crystal Hudson  
29th MPAD  
USD - N Public Affairs

Sergeant Aaron Manis, a human resources specialist with 101st Human Resources Company, calmly walks the halls of the division main building at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, hoping to share his positive attitude with everyone he passes.

"He is a quiet professional with a strong work ethic that completes the mission," said Capt. Johnny Jun, human resources operations officer, 4th Infantry Division.

Manis, a native of Huntington, W.V., is very discreet about what he has experienced during his 10-year career. Most Soldiers would never know the noncommissioned officer helping them with their paperwork was seriously injured during his last tour in Iraq.

### A day to remember

On August 7, 2006, his life was changed forever. Manis, an infantryman at the time, and his team were on a presence patrol in Baghdad, on a day like any other, when they got called to another area to check out a possible threat. There was nothing odd about the area so, with their mission complete, they loaded up to head out.

Manis popped into the gunner's hatch and turned to the rear of the vehicle to make sure it was clear.

"There was a guy 150 feet away and he decided he wanted to be a sniper and tried to take me out," Manis said.

The bullet went in on the right side of his face near his eye and exited there.

"I never lost consciousness," Manis said. "It felt like a big rock being thrown at the side of (my) face."

He recalls putting his hand to his face, and looking at his hand covered in blood. He then dropped down into the vehicle and let the vehicle commander know he was hit.

"The medic came and he performed first aid," Manis said. "There is not really much that you can do but put a bandage on it."

He remembers trying to soothe the other



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Crystal Hudson, 29th MPAD, USD-N Public Affairs  
**Sergeant Aaron Manis, casualty noncommissioned officer in charge, 101st Human Resources Company, 4th Infantry Division, works at his desk at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Sept. 7, 2011. The Huntington, W.V., native successfully returned to active duty after being injured in Baghdad during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2006.**

Soldiers in the vehicle with jokes so they would not worry about the incident.

Manis was evacuated to Germany for treatment, and eventually transferred to Walter Reed Army Medical Center with the hope of repairing the damage to his eye.

"When the bullet entered, the force and the heat of the round forced the retina to scrunch up," Manis said.

Doctors at Walter Reed did all they could to help restore the vision he lost. Unfortunately, the damage was very extensive and Manis is now blind in his right eye.

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***"When the bullet entered,  
the force and heat of the  
round forced the retina to  
scrunch up."***

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Sgt. Aaron Manis  
Casualty NCOIC  
101st Human Resources Co.

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### Recovery

"My wife was heartbroken. I had to calm her down," Manis said. "It is just something that happens, it comes with the territory."

Manis spent six months in recovery at Walter Reed. He said that he did go through a dark time at the hospital.

"I accepted it. I am the one who signed up to be an infantryman," Manis said. "That was the only way that I could heal, by accepting."

Manis said that the Soldiers he encountered at Walter Reed and his Warrior Transition Unit are the best group of Soldiers he has ever met. "I will never forget the heroes I worked with that helped me out in my time of need, and all the friends I've made since then."

### Transition

From Walter Reed, Manis went to Fort Campbell, Ky., to begin his medical board process. He was recommended for reclassification and became a human resources

**See WOUNDED, Pg. 11**



# 'Dark Horse' troops transition base

## U.S. hands over equipment, keys to Iraqi Security Forces

Sgt. Quentin Johnson  
2nd AAB Public Affairs  
1st Cav. Div., USD - N

For more than two years, Contingency Operating Base Cobra, in Diyala province, Iraq, increased its capabilities while serving as a base of operations for deployed Soldiers.

On Sept. 8, 2011, U.S. forces transitioned COB Cobra to the Iraqi Security Forces.

Throughout the month of August, the last of the U.S. Soldiers stationed at COB Cobra departed the base, signing property over to the Iraqi army, said Capt. James Ray, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division - North.

Soldiers from 4th Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt., spent weeks unloading containers, clearing buildings, packing, prepping and shipping material goods remaining on COB Cobra, said 1st Sgt. Michael Williams, HHT first sergeant.

"It has been a long and tedious process of playing 'What's in the connex?'" said Williams.

With the base fully operational for more than two years, mass amounts of supplies accumulated, explained Williams.

Since U.S. and Iraqi forces shared the compound, large numbers of supplies were kept on site for the IA and the Iraqi Security Forces, said Ray.

The transfer of the remaining equipment to the Iraqis is part of the Foreign Excess Personal Property Program, designed to re-utilize all types of items purchased by federal entities.

The battalion left behind buildings, t-walls, and other non-military equipment, said Williams.

"They are going to get a lot of great gym equipment, fully functioning dining facility ... some of the things we left behind (have) provided so much to us," said Ray.

Leaving behind equipment is only part of what took place during the transition, said Ray. "Dark Horse" battalion helped control multiple checkpoints within the Combined Security Area throughout northern Diyala province.

Companies from the battalion worked for weeks transitioning each checkpoint to the IA and Kurdish Peshmerga, he added.

Combined efforts like the checkpoints are lasting memories that many U.S. Soldiers can take joy in when thinking about how their hard work has paid off, said Williams. Training the Iraqi Security Forces played a part in transition as well.

"Soldiers of (the battalion) have invested quite a bit of time in training the Iraqi Army and getting them set up to be able to stand on their own," said Williams. "So it's gratifying to see and do that (training) and to be able to hand them a facility like this, they can use after we are gone to train future generations of the Iraqi Army."

Ray, who agreed with Williams, said the transition was successful, and it allowed the battalion to leave the IA with something that will help to improve the IA's training and security.

"It's a nice area for them to ... conduct training and continue



U.S. Army photos by 2nd Lt. Randy Warren, 2nd AAB, 1st Cav. Div.

**Soldiers with 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division - North, and local Iraqis load various commercial products and goods onto a truck at Contingency Operating Base Cobra, Iraq, in July. The consolidation and shipping of the supplies supported efforts to clear the base as the battalion began the transition of COB Cobra to the Iraqi Army.**



**Captain Matthew Jung, commander, Troop B, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division - North, prepares to hand over checkpoint equipment container keys to Iraqi officers from the 1st Iraqi Army Division, during the transfer of authority for a checkpoint in northern Diyala province June 30, as part of the transition of COB Cobra.**

to build up their security forces in support of their government," said Ray.

Security was an issue associated with the transition, said Lt. Col. Paul Garcia, commander of the 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment. There is always an added risk when troops maneuver from site to site. "We were transitioning out of here and we were in a period of increased risk for all forces involved," said Garcia.

In light of the risks, Dark Horse Soldiers remained vigilant and kept an offensive posture

through the last days of closure, explained Garcia.

His team assisted the ISF in providing security as the last convoys of U.S. Soldiers left COB Cobra.

Dark Horse pride was seen through their tireless efforts as they successfully transitioned the base to Iraqi control, said Ray.

"In the end, this (transition) is extremely satisfying ... it's more than just another notch in the belt. It's a successful mission; something we can hang our hats on as we move on."

# Everything Must Go!

Task Force Devil, Property Assistance Team transfer \$50 million in equipment

Staff Sgt. Robert DeDeaux  
1st AATF Public Affairs  
1st Inf. Div., USD-N

Soldiers of the 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division transferred more than \$50 million in military equipment to the Mobile Redistribution Property Assistance Team Sept. 11, 2011, as a part of the task force's final logistics mission before leaving Contingency Operating Site Warrior.

Throughout the next few weeks, the MRPAT will account for and assume responsibility of the 1st AATF's vehicles and equipment that need to return to the unit's home station. The team will also ensure excess equipment, received as theater provided equipment, is placed back into the military supply system.

"We are accounting for

billions of taxpayer dollars," said Meka Williams, Wholesale Responsible Officer, Team Five, 402nd Army Material Command. "This whole process is about responsibility and accountability. We take responsibility for the equipment ... with hand receipts ... accounting for its cost and recording its next destination."

All of the equipment, vehicles, and weapons in Iraq amount to billions of dollars over the last eight years that must be accounted for, continued the Vienna, Ga., native.

The MRPAT operating on COS Warrior consists of Department of Defense employees with the Army Material Command and Soldiers of the 473rd Quartermaster Company, assigned to the Army Field Support Brigade.

They travel to camps throughout Iraq to assist the

redeploying units with the resource-intensive and time-consuming tasks required in recording, shipping, fixing and tracking millions of dollars of equipment, allowing units to focus more on their tactical missions, said Meka.

The units must still supply a work detail and a logistics officer to help clear the units' hand-receipts, and make sure billeting and travel are arranged, continued Meka.

"The MRPAT provides (1st AATF) with property reduction and reset," said Cpt. Obadiah Pilkington, 1st AATF Deputy Logistics Officer.

Pilkington further detailed how the process of reset and reduction will allow two important things to occur: financial accountability for all of the equipment remaining and the opportunity to identify repairable equipment.

Pilkington explained that

the MRPAT helps the Army better allocate assets to units across the Army, and how identifying repairable equipment allows it to possibly be reused for training purposes or for another deployment.

Any equipment valued less than what it would cost to be shipped elsewhere was offered to the 12th Iraqi Army, the partner unit of the 1st AATF, said Pilkington. A company of Iraqi soldiers collected items they were willing to receive and signed hand receipts, accounting for that equipment.

The 10-year Army veteran from northern Georgia concluded, "The end state is to get all of the property turned in correctly and responsibly in the most efficient way possible to ensure tax payer dollars are not wasted."



U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. Robert DeDeaux, 1st AATF, 1st Inf. Div.

(Left) Soldiers from the 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, along with Soldiers from Team 5, 2nd Battalion, 402nd Army Field Support Brigade, prepare to transfer excess body armor to the Mobile Redistribution Property Assistance Team at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Sept. 10, 2011. (Right) Captain Obadiah Pilkington, Deputy Logistics Officer, 1st AATF, 1st Inf. Div., inspects a generator before transferring it to the MRPAT.







U.S. Army photos by Spc. Crystal Hudson, 29th MPAD, USD-N Public Affairs

**Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, handing out gifts to kids at an orphanage in Tikrit, Iraq, Sept. 12, 2011. The infantrymen gave out school supplies, personal care items and clothing to the children.**

Spc. Cryatal Hudson  
29th MPAD  
USD - N Public Affairs

Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, handed out gifts to more than 50 children at a teaching hospital and a nearby orphanage in Tikrit, Iraq, Sept. 12.

The infantrymen gave out school supplies, clothing and personal care items to the children at both locations. The Soldiers also had gifts for the mothers at the hospital and the care providers at the orphanage.

"A lot of the things that kids take for granted in the U.S. are pretty hard to come by here," said 1st Lt. Luis Matus, platoon leader for Company B's 3rd Platoon.

Items like crayons, colored pencils and coloring books are a luxury to these unfortunate children, Matus said.

"Hopefully, (the children) will see U.S. Forces as good and not threatening," he said.

Matus said this was not one of his platoon's regular missions, however, the gifts were handed out in a familiar place.

"It is a good gesture with the relationship we have been building with the

(hospital staff)," he said. "It is a token of our appreciation."

The Soldiers were joyful while handing out the gifts to the children, Matus said.

"(The gifts) increase the morale and spirits of the people occupying or visiting the hospital," said Lt. Col. Stephen Ruth, commander, Salah al Din Stability Transi-

tion Team, from Houston.

Ruth said Soldiers take part in humanitarian missions to show that U.S. Forces have considerations for the people of Iraq. The U.S. Forces have been getting better at performing humanitarian missions over the years, Ruth added.

"I wanted to take the Soldiers by to have a deep appreciation for what they are doing in Iraq," Ruth said. "A lot of times it is hard for them to see and understand why they are here."

The goal of this mission was to build a stronger relationship with the community. By doing this the people understand what U.S. Forces are doing and can begin to see the value in the progress made in Iraq, Ruth said.

"It allows you to connect with the human factor while you are here," he said. "Whenever you get to see it up close and personal and see the smile on their face, it makes you more human."

In this environment that human aspect is important to maintain, Ruth said.

"Connecting to people allows you to see why you're doing what you're doing," Ruth said. "We are trying to create better security and stability for a future better way of life for (the people of Iraq)."



**Spc. Michael Raneo, an infantryman with Company B, 1st Bn., 5th Cav. Regt., 2nd AAB, 1st Cav. Div., hands out a bag of school supplies to a girl at the orphanage.**



# FSC Soldiers broaden horizons

2nd Lt. Hoang Le  
2nd AAB, 1st Cav. Div.,  
U.S. Division - North

Soldiers pride themselves at being good at their jobs, and some Soldiers go above and beyond by becoming proficient in additional skills to support the mission.

Maintaining vehicles and essential equipment is Sgt. Brian Stoller's primary military occupational specialty, but he contributes to his company's mission in a much different manner. He serves as his company's intelligence support team non-commissioned officer in charge.

The La Crosse, Ind., native takes pride in his contribution to the mission of Forward Support Company G, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, "Red Dragons," 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division - North.

"I like being a part of the COIST, because of how it affects the battlefield and your fellow Soldiers", said Stoller. "Never before have I been in a duty position that allowed me to directly observe effects on the battlefield the way working in the COIST cell does."

COIST utilizes the military decision-making process to provide commanders situational awareness on how intelligence affects elements above, adjacent to, and below a specific unit's echelon of operation. The detailed analysis provided by the COIST, such as trends in attacks or placement of improvised explosive devices, shapes the decisions commanders make on a daily basis.

"Stoller is a great asset to our team," said Capt. Crystal Chatman, a native of Nacogdoches, Texas, and commander of FSC



**Sergeant Brian Stoller, a mechanic and currently an intelligence analyst for FSC G, 3rd Bn., 82nd FA Regt., 2nd AAB, 1st Cav. Div., from La Crosse, Ind., uses specialized computer software to build imagery of his company's area of responsibility, Aug. 10, 2011.**



**Private First Class Alan Legardo, a food service specialist for Forward Support Company G, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, United States Division - North, and native of Columbus, Mo., visually inspects night vision goggles maintained in his company arms room, Aug. 10, 2011.**

G. "His hunger for knowledge in the intelligence arena is what makes him stand out. He is resourced by other batteries' COIST and by battalion intelligence analysts for mission essential products. They all function well together as a team."

Stoller's predictive analysis has benefited the company's logistical patrols to the Samarra Joint Coordination Center.

Stoller uses trend analysis and compiles historical data for improvised explosive device engagement areas along key routes in Southern Salah ad-Din province. This analysis enables him to identify the most likely engagement areas the patrol operates within to conduct resupply and counter indirect fire patrols.

Though he has spent little time as the COIST NCOIC, he has learned essential skills quickly.

"I spent no time attached to an intelligence company or military police element. I simply used all the information that I've received from my training", said Stoller, who added that the level of enjoyment gained from doing his job sparks his enthusiasm. "I love what I do, and I love teaching others how I get at my analysis."

Stoller isn't the only Soldier in the company who works beyond the parameters of his duty description.

In 2010, Pfc. Alan Legardo, a native of Columbus, Mo., enlisted into the Army as a

food service specialist.

Legardo was also assigned the additional duty of being the unit's primary armorer shortly after his arrival to the unit and completion of an armorer course.

"Legardo was highly recommended as the right person for the job. His attention to detail and level of maturity enables us to trust him with the responsibility he now has," said his section leader, Sgt. Jeffery Taylor, a Temple, Texas, native.

Legardo welcomes this opportunity to broaden his horizons.

"Being an armorer is a great learning experience. Before I got into the Army, I worked in a local retail store where weapons were sold, but I've never done a job like this," said Legardo.

Responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of more than \$4 million worth of weapons, Legardo holds his position in high regard and enjoys the idea of embarking on new experiences.

"The arms room is a good change from the dining facility. This broadens my knowledge about the Army. I prefer the arms room over the dining facility because it's a new challenge."

Although Soldiers are trained in a certain MOS, they must be prepared to do something else based on the Army's current needs, even something drastically different from their main occupation.



# Hey Doc: Is low back pain preventable?

Sgt. Mitchell LaFleur,  
Patient Admin. NCOIC  
Division Surgeon, USD-N

"Hey Doc, It's getting close to re-deployment and between packing connex's and pushing it in the gym, I've noticed my lower back seems to be aching all the time. How can I get rid of these pains and avoid further injury?"

Signed,  
Achy Breaky Back

Achy Breaky,

Your question hits the nail on the head regarding preventable back pain. With all of the recreational and operational physical activity involving back and spine use, we could all use a little education to prevent low back pain.

LBP can be boiled down to two categories: work related and poor muscular structure/posture.

The most common type of low back pain is a strain or "pulled muscle" from overuse or accidents. There are two ways to prevent LBP.

First, be safe and aware of your back when doing physical labor. Always bend at your knees when bending over to

lift an object. When picking up a load or pulling a load, always let your legs do the work, not your back.

Second, prevent injuries by strengthening your legs and lower back through exercise. Always consider this in your personal exercise program. Choose exercises with techniques that improve back and leg strength without potentially causing more harm due to poor form or excessive weight. If you are unsure about these types of exercises, contact your unit's master fitness trainer or medical personnel.

After a personal experience with back pain, I was reminded

of the three areas of weakness that contribute to LBP: abdominal muscles, hamstrings, and the lower back itself.

Often not considered, weak abs are a common suspect for low back pain. Whoa! This doesn't make sense, right? How could my stomach muscles make my back hurt? In fact, abdominal muscles support the upper body up when standing. If the abs are weak, then the body may stoop forward, putting undue stress on the lower back. Eventually, this can cause weakness and pain in the lower back.

In my case, this was the problem. I started doing ab

work on a regular basis and my LBP disappeared. I was able to return to my regular life and have rarely had any symptoms since.

Even more surprising, LBP can also be caused by tight hamstrings. We engage these muscles to walk, run, stand and pretty much do every other activity. Failure to stretch these active muscles results in tension. This can cause a muscle imbalance, leading to LBP.

Posture is extremely important to reduce back pain. Since our bodies were not made to sit for long periods of time at a computer, it is important that we maintain good posture. This means sitting square to our desk with even distribution of weight on our buttocks. Our shoulders are rolled back and not hunched forward. Also, ensure that you are not sitting of more than one hour without taking a walk or stretching out.

Minimize caffeinated or dehydrating beverages and drink plenty of water, as dehydration can further worsen or cause muscle pain and discomfort.

Remember: knees bent leads to a safe back

Taskforce Ironhorse!



## WOUNDED Cont'd from Pg. 9

specialist.

This tour, his third in Iraq, has been unlike his other deployments as an infantryman. Manis is currently working as the casualty NCO in charge for the 4th Infantry Division, U.S. Division – North.

"Sgt. Manis' personal experience in the Army casualty reporting process provides him a unique knowledge base, which bolsters his abilities to lead a critical mission," said Jun, a native of Huntington Beach, Calif.

Manis is a living example of the Army Warrior Ethos: he placed the mission first, never accepted defeat and never quit, Jun said.

Manis draws experience from his time in the WTU and applies that knowledge to his current leadership style.

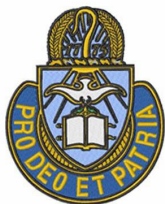
"I took one thing from the WTU – every Soldier is unique," he said. "Two people might have the same injury on paper, but it is not the same injury to them."

One Soldier may be able to handle

the injury really well while the other may struggle with it, Manis continued.

Manis' decision to return to active duty after his injury, enables him to provide actual combat experience to his current position. He sets a positive example for all of the Soldiers he encounters, Jun said.

"You don't have to be wounded or, sadly, lose your life in combat to be a hero," Manis said. "Just wear that uniform and serve your country and do it the right way. You will be a hero."



# Chaplain's Corner:

## Lessons from the 'Dust Devils'

Chaplain (Maj.) Kenneth Hurst  
Deputy Chaplain  
U.S. Division - North

One of the frequent daily sights here in Iraq, as well as many southwestern states back home, are the tornado-like vortices commonly called "Dust Devils." They have absolutely nothing to do with the devil and everything to do with dust and sand. You can easily spot two or three while on your way to the DFAC for lunch or perhaps have one cross your path while doing PT in the afternoon. Before we consider some lessons from this phenomenon, let's understand how they form.

As we can tell from observing our surroundings, dust devils form where there is strong surface heating from the sun on dirt fields and flat areas. Preferred conditions include clear skies and light winds. Two simple principles are at work: hot air is less dense and rises (cooler air sinks), and the conservation of angular momentum. As the sun heats the ground and the air just above it, it creates an unstable condition with the cooler air higher up. The hot air on the ground tries to rise through the cooler air around it. This rapidly rising pocket will begin to rotate. If conditions allow it to grow, it will pull in more hot air form its surroundings and begin to stretch vertically.

As more hot air (and dust) rushes toward the developing vortex, replacing the hot air that is rising, its rotation is intensi-

fied and it speeds up. There is a fine balance here between the rising hot air carrying the dust and the cooler low-pressure air which sinks and reinforces the funnel structure. As long as there is a sufficient supply of warm unstable air, the dust devil will continue to move across the ground, due to the conservation of momentum.

Dust devils generally reach wind speeds of 45 to 60-plus miles per hour and reach altitudes of normally 500 to 1,000 feet. Some have extended several thousand feet, but they are rare.

Ok, avoiding the obvious lesson of "too much hot air," what can we take away from this popular piece of nature and physics?

The most significant lesson from dust devils is the very important quality of endurance. As we see every day, dust devils do not last long. They have a normal life span in the tens of minutes, with the largest possibly lasting a half hour. They are mostly sensitive to changes in temperature and air pressure. The finely-tuned balance that creates them can easily be upset and the dust devil will dissipate.

I want you to consider three areas of endurance at this stage. First – endurance with the mission. If you are leaving on Main Body 2, the mission doesn't end when you get on the plane; it simply transfers to Fort Carson. Those of us remaining longer should stay engaged and vigilant. We need to maintain those key skills

and attitudes as we change chapters in the great book that is the story of the 4th Infantry Division.

The second place for endurance is your personal faith and walk with God. During this deployment, many Soldiers have grown spiritually. The things they have done, while here in country, to build and strengthen their faith must continue once we return. The Apostle Paul wisely encourages believers, "the things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice, and the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:9).

Finally, the third area for endurance is in that of personal hardship and struggle. During this year away, there have been many folks who have experienced personal hardship at home. While this is typical for a deployment, it is still extremely painful for our troops. Again, consider the dust devil: given the proper conditions it can maintain momentum and reach great heights. Hang in there dear brother or sister; the Lord will care for you and we will be home soon.

One final piece of trivia to close this topic: where are the most distantly observed dust devils? Those are the dust devils observed on the planet Mars and photographed by the Mars rover Spirit in 2005. Who would have thought – dust devils in space! Still, the same rules apply and endurance is equally a factor for these Martian equivalents as it is for USD-N.

### USD-N Social Media

To read more stories and see the photos that go with them, as well as some videos, check out the links below. Read and share what you see and pass along the Soldiers' stories.



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