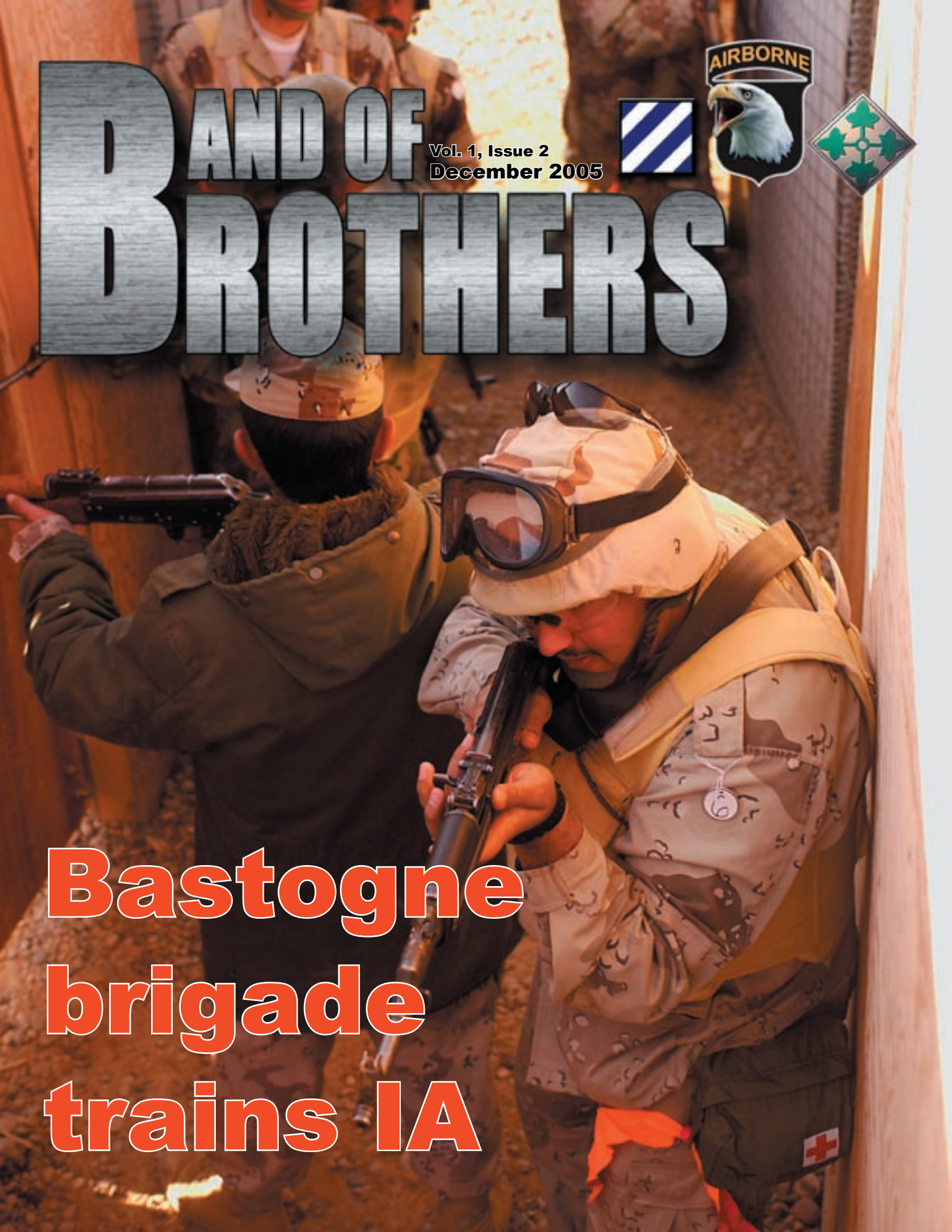


BAND OF BROTHERS

Vol. 1, Issue 2
December 2005



**Bastogne
brigade
trains IA**

Aaron Tippin performs for troops Thanksgiving Day

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photo by Spc. Jeanine Kinville

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On the cover...

Iraqi Army Soldiers practice clearing a room during a close quarters battle dry run at a weapons class conducted by the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division at Forward Operations Base McHenry, Iraq, during Operation Iraqi Freedom Nov. 23.

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photo by Tech Sgt. Andy Dunaway

Purrfect Angelz

Tour Iraq



photos by Sgt. Sean Riley

(Above) The Purrfect Angelz, a Los Angeles-based dance troupe, graced the Morale, Welfare and Recreation hanger on Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Nov. 12. The five-woman troupe performed high-energy dance routines for the Soldiers and civilians of the FOB. (Top right) An Angel prances in a cowgirl outfit for the crowd. (Right) One of the dancers eats lunch with Spc. David De La Cruz, 501st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, prior to a performance at FOB Speicher.



photo by Sgt. Ryan Matson

BAND OF BROTHERS

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One thing will remain constant during this deployment -- change. And no one is more capable of handling change than the 101st Airborne Division.

The Army is a creature of constant change. Units grow, they adapt, Soldiers come and go, and nothing ever stays the same for very long. It is the Army's very nature of always transforming that makes it so dependable. The 101st has seen its fair share of changes in the last year, and you can depend on there being changes during this deployment.

Our assumption of north central Iraq from Task Force Liberty was the first major change. We have taken control of this area of operations and have begun to pick up where they left off.

Another source of change is reflected in our work with the Iraqi Army. We will train Iraqi Soldiers to take over security operations in north central Iraq one installation at a time. The Soldiers of the Iraqi Army are taking on more responsi-



bility daily and adapting to how we operate.

A recent example was the turnover of Forward Operating Base Danger in Tikrit to the Iraqi government Nov. 22. Iraqi Security Forces have proven themselves willing and able to take control of that area -- the 25th installation to be relinquished to the people of Iraq.

The better we do our job of helping Iraq become self-sufficient and self-regulating, the sooner Iraqi

Soldiers will be able to stand on their own.

Soon we will absorb northwest Iraq into our AO. And as we turn over more and more of this country back to its own Army, the more our role here will change. We will move from training the Iraqi Army, to sitting back and taking on a more observational role.

Change is good. Change during this deployment means that we are succeeding at our mission in Iraq. The people of Iraq are looking forward to things changing for the better -- the Soldiers of Task Force Band of Brothers are the perfect instrument of that change.

Make America proud.
AIR ASSAULT!!

Thomas R. Turner
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding

A handwritten signature of Thomas R. Turner in black ink.

Fellow Warriors of Task Force Band of Brothers, by the time you read this month's publication, the historical Iraqi elections will be history. Every one of you, in one way or another, will have played an integral part in setting the conditions to making the elections a success.

We have watched the Iraqi Security Forces that we trained and advised take charge of election security. We watched Iraqi citizens exercise their right to vote, showing the world that terrorism and evil will not hold back Iraq. You are part of the new history of Iraq -- something that each and every one of you can be justly proud of.

Task Force Band of Brothers has made a tremendous impact since taking over MND-NC on Nov. 1. We have moved out aggressively into our area of responsibility, met our Iraqi allies, and are destroy-



ing our enemies. Over the past month and a half, we have learned the lay of the land and have become more effective on the battlefield. All of this has of course come with a price.

We have lost numerous comrades, killed and wounded in action. Our losses will never be forgotten, but they also will not slow us down or cause us to falter. We will continue to see success as we aggressively take the fight to the enemy. We

owe that to ourselves and the folks back home.

I ask that all combat leaders continually AAR each and every combat action. No matter how horrific and costly the action may be, we must take away the lessons learned and apply them in a positive manner to our next mission. This will ensure that we exercise more lethality towards our enemies and are able to be

more compassionate to the Iraqi citizens we seek to help.

New forces continue to join our Task Force. I would like to give a belated welcome to the 555th Combat Enhancement Brigade and welcome 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, which is presently flowing into sector. Our 4th Brigade Combat Team, "Currahee," is finally in sector and conducting combat operations under the command and control of 4th Infantry Division. Welcome to all!

Finally, it's that special time of the year, the holiday season is upon us -- a time for giving and for peace. Please take a moment every day and reflect on the magnitude of what we are doing for our families and the free world. As your command sergeant major, I want each and every one of you to personally know how proud I am of who you are and commend you for the brave actions you conduct daily in Iraq. Have a very Merry and Blessed Christmas, Holiday Season and New Years. Hooah! Air Assault!

Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe
Division Command Sergeant Major

Weapons cache found in cemetery



Staff Sgt. Jesse Riggin

3rd Brigade Combat Team
101st Airborne Division

BAYJI, Iraq -- Rakkasans from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, and the Iraqi Army uncovered a weapons cache in west Bayji Nov. 28.

Specialist Zachary McCracken and Sgt. Joshua Weiss, HHC 1-187, and two Soldiers from the Iraqi Army found two Soviet made rockets in a graveyard being guarded by Iraqi Security Forces.

Saddam Hussein had a strong influence in the area prior to his capture. The area still harbors many Anti-Iraqi Forces. The graveyard itself holds the tombs of two of Saddam's cousins.

The Rakkasans decided to search the sight based on information gathered from previous missions in the area. ■



photos by Staff Sgt. Jesse Riggin

(Above) Private Zachary McCracken, Headquarters and Headquarters Company 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, examines two Soviet-made rockets found during a joint operation between the Iraqi Army and 3rd Brigade Combat Team. (Below) McCracken and Iraqi Army Soldier Fulih Mohammed probe for weapon caches in a cemetery in west Bayji, Iraq, Nov. 28.



Courtesy photo

Soldiers with the 27th Land Clearing Team, attached to the 168th Engineers during the Vietnam War, created this Christmas card to send home to family members.

DEATH OF A CACHE



story and photos by Spc. Barbara Ospina
1st Brigade Combat Team
101st Airborne Division



Dig them up... Pack them up... Blow them up!

KIRKUK, Iraq -- A massive weapons cache was destroyed by the Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit of the 506th Air Expeditionary Group outside Forward Operating Base Warrior Dec. 5.

The cache, consisting of more than 4,200 mortar rounds and 950 fuses totaling more than 15 tons, was initially discovered in the ground just outside Kirkuk by Iraqi Army Soldiers Nov. 27. Once the Iraqi Soldiers began excavating the cache, they discovered it was much larger than expected and called for help from the 101st Airborne Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team. The cache took two days to unearth.

The EOD unit rolled outside the perimeter of FOB Warrior Dec. 5, hauling the weapons cache and 1,800 pounds of C-4 explosives. The three-hour preparation for the 30-second explosion consisted of downloading the cache into two separate masses approximately 25 meters apart. Wooden boxes containing the confiscated ammunition were set

side-by-side and covered with bars of C-4. The words "fire in the hole" carried across the vast dirt range just before the EOD team detonated the ammunition. As the words faded, an orange ball of fire erupted from the ground, spitting up a mushroom cloud of smoke and dust. Just seconds later, the words echoed again as the command was given to detonate the second pile. A second blast roared skyward, following the same pattern of the first.

Though the cache took many long hours to gather, in less than a minute the threat of this ammunition being used against the Iraqi Security Forces, innocent Iraqi citizens, or U.S. forces was terminated.

"It was a good find, I'm glad the Iraqi Army found it over someone else," said Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Wayne, an EOD team chief at the discovery site. "All those rounds are potential improvised explosive devices. We just stopped that many more IEDs." ■



photo by Tech Sgt. Jennifer Wayne



(Left) Iraqi Army Soldiers pose for a picture in between loading mortar rounds into an LMTV for transport by EOD. (Above) Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team form a chain to load mortar rounds. (Top: left to right) A Soldier digs up mortar rounds at the site. Technical Sgt. Jennifer Wayne, EOD team chief, packs C-4 explosives on the ammunition in preparation for a controlled detonation. Two separate explosions send a ball of flames into the air as more than 4,200 mortar rounds were detonated.



**Chaplain (Maj.)
Michael Yarman**

Merry Christmas to everyone in the footprint of the Screaming Eagles.

Here we are in the middle of the holiday season and we're all separated from our loved ones.

Maybe that's not the most encouraging way to begin a chaplain's article, but my goal is to share with you how there can be hope in the middle of separations and deployments.

I know that all of us in Task Force Band of Brothers are praying for our families at home as well as the troops here in harms way. We have hope in the middle of the Deployment!

I'd like to share with you what my own faith background says about hope and deployments with the "hope" that this might be an encouragement to you during this season.

Listen to what the Bible says in Galatians 4:4: *In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son.*

God deployed His Son. It began in a small town in Israel over 2000 years ago.

The deployment lasted about 33 years.

The Bible goes on to say in John 3:16: *God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life.*

So God the Father deployed God the Son. What was the purpose of the deployment? To pay the price for Sin and to bring us the hope of everlasting, or eternal life.

It was a deployment of hope. The mission was very focused.

Jesus completed His mission on Easter Sunday and soon after, returned home, but not before He gave us hope to make it through the difficulties of life, like Deployments.

So here we are, deployed over Christmas, but we too have a focused mission.

To bring hope to the Iraqi people.

Certainly we would not choose to be here over Christmas. But then again, I'm sure Jesus would have preferred to have been at home with His Father as well.

I hope that this real life story makes sense to you and that your own Faith story brings you comfort and gives meaning to this wonderful season.

Maybe you have a faith story that you can share with your loved ones when you call or e-mail them. If not, perhaps my story will be "Good News."

Chaplains and confidentiality

While you're deployed, you may want to talk to a chaplain about something and you don't want anyone to know about it. You may not even be someone who goes to Church, but you feel that a chaplain might be safe to talk to.

Rest assured that when you talk to a chaplain, seeking confidentiality, your conversation is safe. We are there to listen. It's important to us that you have a place where you can share what's going on in your life and know that we will protect your right to privacy.

The only exception to that right to privacy is of course, when we feel that you're going to do something to hurt yourself or others. Then we're going to make sure that we help you do the right thing because we care about your health, your family's health, and a strong Army. So please don't let the burdens of being away from home keep you seeing your Chaplain when you just need a safe place to talk.

Cpt. Reva Rogers, RD
101st Airborne Division Dietician

Today's Soldiers must operate intricate computer-controlled systems, quickly identify threats in a complex environment, and be ready to react on a moments notice.

As the number of requirements placed upon us increases, typically the amount of sleep we get decreases. Although sleep is the most effective way to ensure we continue functioning at a high level, in reality, getting eight hours of sleep a night is often a luxury only dreamt about.

People's need for sleep varies greatly -- some Soldiers function fine on as little as 5 ½ hours of sleep, while others may require as many as 9 ½ hours for optimal performance.

If you continually operate on 7 or less hours of sleep a night, your performance -- both physical and mental -- may suffer.

Sleep is the best way to restore a decrease in mental and physical performance caused by sleep deprivation. Several studies have found napping for as little as 15

minutes can result in a marked improvement in mental functioning. However, if you are unable to get enough sleep at night or take naps, caffeine may help improve both your physical and mental performance.

Before deciding to consume caffeine as a performance enhancer you should first consider the potential side effects and warnings.

Caffeine warnings and effects:

- You should not use caffeine if you have high blood pressure or if you have a family history of high blood pressure.
- Caffeine increases your urine output, therefore increasing your risk for becoming dehydrated.
- Caffeine can, at least temporarily, increase calcium excretion. This becomes a problem if your calcium intake is low.

How much should you take?

If sleep deprived, doses of 100-600 mg may improve cognitive function. The Committee on Military Nutrition Research recommended in it's book, Caffeine for the Sustainment of Mental Task Performance: Formulations for Military Operations (2001), limiting

caffeine consumption to no more than 600 mg. Doses of caffeine over 600 mg can degrade your cognitive function, negatively effect mood, and can make sleeping difficult when you finally get to rest.

How should I take it?

Caffeine can be consumed in a variety of ways. The committee recommends using a caffeine-containing food bar or chewing gum as the mechanism. This enables you to more accurately determine exactly how much caffeine you are consuming.

Quitting caffeine

Most of us have heard of, or experienced the headaches, drowsiness, and irritability associated with caffeine withdrawal. Obviously these symptoms can negatively impact your ability to function at a high level and should be avoided during critical operations.

It is best not to go "cold turkey" when stopping caffeine intake if you want to avoid caffeine withdrawal. Slowly reducing the amount you consume or consuming low doses (25 – 50 mg) of caffeine should prevent the occurrence of withdrawal symptoms. ■

Dosing for caffeine gum

- Mental performance when adequately rested: Start with 1 piece and use as needed.
- Mental performance when sleep deprived: start with 1 stick and use as needed not to exceed 2 sticks per hour for up to 6 hours.
- Physical performance: chew 2 sticks for 5 minutes followed by 2 more sticks at the start of activity. Re-dose every 6 hours.
- Combined physical and mental performance: follow guideline for physical performance re-dosing with 1 stick as needed.

From: Canadian Military Journal, Winter 2003-2004

Caffeine content:

Source	mg
Coffee brewed drip method (6 oz)	100
Tea, 6 oz, steeped for 3 min	36
Cola, 12 oz	35-50
Mountain Dew, 12 oz	54
Hot Cocoa, 6 oz	4
Caffeine gum	100

From: Krause's Food Nutrition and Diet Therapy

Coalition Forces return Iraqi land

Pfc. Cassandra Groce

133rd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

TIKRIT, Iraq -- The Iraqi government took control of Saddam Hussein's palace complex from Coalition Forces in a historic ceremony Nov. 22 in Tikrit.

Four different U.S. Army units have used the complex as a forward operating base since 2003.

"Now it is the property of the Iraqi people," said Hamad Hamood Shekti, governor of the Salah Ad Din territory. "Tourists will be allowed to see the palaces."

Colonel Mark McKnight, commander of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, handed the "key to the city" to Shekti during the ceremony, signifying the release of U.S. control.

"The passing of this facility is a simple ceremony that vividly demonstrates the continuing progress being made by the Iraqi government and their people," McKnight said. "Two years ago, Coalition Forces fought to rid this nation of an oppressive regime. Since that time, Coalition Forces... have resided on FOB Danger, working alongside Iraqis to protect the four provinces of north central Iraq."

Although 24 other coalition operating bases have been turned over to the people of Iraq, the Tikrit palace complex is the most largest transaction. The complex is on more than 1,000 acres of land along the Tigris River.

There are 136 buildings on the property, with a combined 1.5 million square feet of administrative and living space.

The province was and will stay "a symbol of national unity and brotherhood in Iraq" Shekti said.

"[Today], we celebrate the transfer of the presidential palaces to the patriotic Iraqi hands, signifying the many aspirations and goals of the great citizens of the Salah Ad Din province," Shekti said.

Shekti said he looks forward to Iraq's independence, when all multi-national forces are able to leave Iraq, and wants to prove the people of Iraq can manage their issues independently.

"These palaces are owned by not one person anymore," he said, "and no one will be prevented from entering them in the future, because now it is



photo by Sgt. Dallas Walker

Abdullah Hussein, deputy governor of Salah Ad Din Province, raises the Iraqi flag in a symbolic moment in history as the people of Iraq took control of Forward Operating Base Danger in Tikrit, Nov. 22.

the property of the Iraqi people."

The palace complex was initially secured by the 4th Infantry Division in 2003 and designated as Camp Iron Horse during Operation Iraqi Freedom I. Saddam Hussein was captured near Camp Iron Horse in December 2003.

The base was redesignated FOB

Danger once it came under the control of the 1st Infantry Division out of Wurzburg, Germany.

The 42nd Infantry Division, a National Guard unit based in New York, took over the FOB Feb. 14, and in July, began the process of returning the complex to the Iraqi people. ■

Handing over Danger



(Left) One of Saddam Hussein's many palaces sits on the bank of the Tigris River on Forward Operating Base Danger in Tikrit, Iraq. (Above) Major Gen. Thomas Turner, commander, 101st Airborne Division and Task Force Band of Brothers, escorts Hamad Hamood Shekti, the governor of Salah Ad Din Province, before a ceremony to return FOB Danger to the Iraqi government Nov. 22. . (Bottom left) Colonel Mark McKnight hands the "key to the city" to Shekti. (Bottom right) General George Casey, commanding general of Multinational Force-Iraq, listens to Shekti speak of the future of Iraq during the ceremony.

photos by Sgt. Dallas Walker



Iraqi Army takes lead in north central Iraq

Staff report

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

TIKRIT, Iraq -- Coalition Soldiers are finding they can depend more heavily on the Iraqi Army for things that just two years ago would have been impossible. Continuous training between the Iraqi and American Soldiers has led to increased independence, showing the world that the IA is close to standing on its own.

Soldiers with 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry, 3rd Infantry Division in Balad, come in daily contact with their counterparts in the Iraqi Army and can see vast improvement from when they first arrived in country 10 months ago.

"When we first got here, they needed equipment, uniforms, training -- you name it. But they've really come a long way," said Sgt. Rick McNamara, a civil affairs Soldier at Forward Operating Base Paliwoda in Balad.

Training the new Iraqi Army along lines similar to the U.S. Army was one of the early focuses for Coalition Forces. The old Iraqi Army had been organized in the antiquated Soviet-style Army organization -- there was not a strong corps of non-commissioned officers.

"You were either an officer or enlisted. And for the officers, their leadership style was very different from what we are accustomed to," said Capt. Eric Haynes, Military Transition Team leader, whose mission is to train and equip the new Iraqi Army.

IA Soldiers on Paliwoda work closely with their U.S. counterparts in every facet -- in the first aid station, tactical operations center, motor pool, and the Joint Coordination Center.

The Iraqi troops have also taken the lead on patrols in the Baqubah area in preparation for taking over the reigns of security from 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment.

"They will do the clearing and we're there in case they need any support," said Sgt. 1st Class Richard Bryant, platoon sergeant.

During the patrols, Iraqi troops are matched with American Soldiers of similar grades.

"This allows them to work together and continue the training from the Soldier level to the senior leadership level," said Capt. Pat Moffett, com-

mander, Battery A, 1st Bn., 10th FA.

Moffett has seen the progress with the Iraqis first hand.

"When we first got here, we did a lot of individual operations," Moffett said. "In the last five to six months, [the IA] have been conducting their own operations. In some cases, they've actually requested us to stay out of the way."

The artillery Soldiers recently conducted a joint patrol with the IA, clearing a palm grove in search of terrorists and weapons caches. The mission allowed the 1-10 leaders time to evaluate the performance of the Iraqi Army.

The joint patrol between the Soldiers of two different nations was a step in the right direction in moving toward giving the IA full responsibility of securing the Baqubah area, Moffett said.

IA Soldiers in the Tikrit area are also taking the lead from Coalition Forces in security measures.

A vehicle-borne IED was detonated in Cataseea, Iraq, just north of Tikrit, Nov. 13. Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment responded only to find the IA Soldiers had the situation under control.

Capt. Sam Donnelly, commander of Company A, 2nd Bn., 7th Inf. Reg, said

the IA has come a long way during the last few months while working with their American counterparts.

"The people here have really toughened up a lot," he said. "The Iraqi Army now takes the lead in situations like this and we just get situational awareness. A VBIED is not able to stop the whole day like it use to."

"They're saving lives -- U.S. lives, coalition lives," said 1st Lt. James Bithorn, 5-7 platoon sergeant.

"We've seen an outpouring of civilians coming forward with information, wanting to help us and wanting to help the IA," he said. "The people are really getting behind them. Without the Iraqi Army, U.S. success in this region would be nil."

The coalition footprint will continue to shrink as the IA and other Iraqi Security Forces gain the confidence and experience to take control of more of their country.

Coalition Forces have given more than 25 installations back to the people of Iraq with the confidence that the Iraqi Army can keep the areas secured.

Four more installations will be relinquished to the Iraqi government in the coming months. ■



photo by Spc. Michael Pfaff

First Lt. Mark McCool, 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment, coordinates a route with an Iraqi Army senior leader during a dismounted patrol near Baqubah, Iraq.

IA Soldiers train with



Bastogne mortar platoon

photo by Tech Sgt. Andy Dunaway

Staff Sgt. Jason Lyday, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, monitors the movement of the Iraqi Army Soldiers as they clear a room during a dry run of close quarters battle at a weapons class at Forward Operations Base McHenry Iraq, Nov. 23.

Spc. Barbara Ospina
1st Brigade Combat Team
101st Airborne Division

KIRKUK, Iraq -- Soldiers of the mortar platoon for 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment are training Iraqi Army Soldiers of the Hawijah area to help advance their skills in close-combat and perform joint operations with U.S. Forces.

Training begins every Saturday at Forward Operating Base McHenry for a platoon of about 40 Iraqi Soldiers, and those who meet training standards graduate the following Thursday, according to 2nd Lt. Jason Lathey, the mortar platoon leader for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt.

The training begins at the individual level with each Iraqi Soldier learning to aim, zero and qualify with their weapon.

"The Iraqi Soldiers seemed frustrated at first, but once they started hitting

the target, they became more motivated about training," Lathey said, referring to a recent class.

The training progressed through the week from basic rifle marksmanship to a live fire cordon and search.

Iraqi Soldiers were also trained in reflexive firing. Bastogne Soldiers guided them through how to properly turn and when to raise their weapon for close quarters marksmanship, teaching the Iraqi Soldiers how to maneuver in small spaces such as rooms or buildings.

Mortar platoon Soldiers taught the IA how to move as a four-person team, then how to move as a squad in a mock shoot house.

"The Iraqi Soldiers definitely caught onto the shoot-house the fastest," Lathey said. "Once they saw the demonstrations, the battle drills went pretty smoothly."

The platoon's training came to an end with an afternoon graduation. This marks the beginning of joint operations with U.S. Forces.

The graduating platoon will return to the installation to link up with an assigned company and help with upcoming missions.

They will work side-by-side with U.S. Soldiers as they rid cities of terrorism and prepare take over operations in their respective area.

According to Lathey, once all Iraqi Soldiers in the area have completed the training, the Battalion will possibly up the ante.

"Depending on operation performance, the Iraqi Soldiers who have completed training will return for advanced training," Lathey said. "They will train techniques of dismount movements and patrols."

With Iraqi Soldiers training so proficiently, Lathey believes that before the battalion's deployment in Iraq is over, they will be able to hand operations over to the IA Soldiers.

"The Iraqi Army has the potential to be a very strong, independent Army," Lathey said. ■

See printed edition for pull-out poster of this image.



Rakkasans from Company C, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, sit in an over-watch position as an AH 64 Apache attack helicopter provides close air support in preparation for a cordon and search in the village of Tarig, Iraq, Nov. 14.

photo by Staff Sgt. Jesse Riggins

Adapt and Overcome

Apache battalion ends unpredictable tour in Iraq

Sgt. Ryan Matson

101st Combat Aviation Brigade
101st Airborne Division

MOSUL, Iraq -- Adapt and overcome.

As their second deployment to Iraq in less than three years winds down, this has been a motto the 2nd Battalion, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade has had to live by.

The battalion left Fort Campbell for Iraq in January -- less than a year after it had returned from deploying to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom I. In fact, the last bird in the AH 64D Apache attack helicopter battalion had just finished being reset from the wear and tear of the desert environment only a week before the unit left. From the time the battalion left Fort Campbell, only one thing was constant -- that nothing at all was constant.

"Initially, we anticipated the whole battalion would go to Balad, replace the 18th Aviation Brigade, and support the ground units in and around Balad," said Maj. Ted LeBlow, executive officer, 2nd Battalion, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade. "We also thought we would provide assistance in Operation Safe Skies over Balad to help deter any indirect fire attacks or improvised explosive devices on the route in and out of Balad."

The deployment started smoothly enough. The battalion hit the port in Ashyuaiba Jan. 26, and within 24 hours, had flown all 24 of their Apaches and convoyed all rolling stock to Camp Beuhring, Kuwait.

However, after only four days at Beuhring, as the battalion was completing its prerequisite training there, 2nd Battalion's mission took the first of several unpredictable turns.

The battalion received a change of mission in Kuwait, sending one company of attack aircraft to Forward Operating Base Kalsu in support of the 3rd Expeditionary Marines. The rest of the battalion moved to Balad to conduct Operation Safe Skies -- all of this happened very quickly.

"Normally, you get a 14-day minimal



photos by Sgt. Ryan Matson

Chief Warrant Officer Charles Miller, an Apache pilot with 2nd Battalion, 101st Combat Aviation brigade, checks out the main rotor blades of an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter. This is Miller's second deployment to Iraq as a pilot with 2nd Battalion.

training plan when you get into theater at Kuwait," LeBlow said. "That doesn't count unloading the boat and all that, so usually you're there between 14 and 20 days, closer to three weeks. From the time the boat hit the ground at port to the time the first aircraft arrived in Balad, there were between five and six days, while still doing all the required training and gunneries, including a convoy live fire in Kuwait."

The first aircraft touched down in Balad Feb. 1 as others headed to Kalsu, providing cover for a convoy of troops and supplies below. The split operations began. In Balad, the battalion conducted Operations Safe Skies, as expected.

"The aircraft would fly to known points of origin that the enemy had used in the past for both mortars and [missiles], the most likely coordinates where they would [attack again]," LeBlow explained. "For the time we were there, we drastically reduced the number of rocket and mortar attacks from previous months, and there were no [missile] attacks during that time.

We even incorporated IED patrols on the main route in and out of the FOB."

The battalion used aircraft to deter and eliminate these threats, as well as to support ground forces in Balad. Meanwhile, in Kalsu, the battalion focused on providing direct support, reconnaissance, and a quick reactionary force in support of the 3rd Expeditionary Marines aligned with the Army's 1-55th Enhanced Separate Brigade.

After a couple of months running missions in Balad and Kalsu, the battalion received another surprise. They were issued orders moving them to Qayyarah West, the same place they had been deployed during their last rotation in Iraq.

"The news we would move came right as we had just got settled in," LeBlow said. "But once we saw the conditions up here and what the place was like, I think everyone was happy to return [to Q-West] versus staying there. Balad is very crowded and this place is a lot more spaced out with some nice accommodations."

The battalion arrived at Q-West at

the end of March. There, the aircraft would be split between Q-West and Mosul Air Field. Being in the same area as their first deployment gave the battalion one advantage -- knowledge of their area of operations, although, the familiarity of the battlefield wasn't enough.

"We needed everybody to not treat it like last time," LeBlow said. "Although the terrain might be the same, the enemy is completely different. If we would have kept the mind set of, 'I've been here. I've done this before,' we would have set ourselves up for trouble. Things have changed, where the enemy's at, the whole situation is completely different. So we told people to treat it that way."

Pilots who had deployed with the unit the first time noticed the differences in the enemy they were facing.

"The insurgency wasn't as organized as it is now. There's a lot more going on for us this time than after the ground war portion of OIF 1," said Chief Warrant Officer Charles Miller, a 2nd Battalion attack pilot. "That's reflected by the fact that this time, over half of our aircraft received battle damage. We didn't have any that received battle damage in [Operation Iraqi Freedom 1]."

Overall, the battalion handled the twists and turns of this deployment well. That was because of a high rate of combat veterans, said Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Mione, 2nd Battalion command sergeant major.

"We came over, from the Noncommissioned Officer side of the house, with almost 80 percent combat veterans," he said. "Having that amount of combat veterans in a unit makes a huge difference."

Despite all the adapting and unpredictability of their latest deployment to Iraq, 2nd Battalion looks to end their deployment on a very positive note. The battalion, who is spending their final days as part of the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, has been through two dangerous deployments and to date, has not lost any Soldiers in combat. They will re-align as part of transformation with a Fort Riley, Kan., unit shortly after returning to Fort Campbell. Despite the fact that about half of the battalion's aircraft have suffered battle damage, everyone in the battalion is hoping they can redeploy with the same status as their last trip home -- all accounted for.

"That's been our goal and our prayer and our biggest concern," LeBlow said. "We've been very fortunate to have done what we've done so far, and hopefully we can continue this for the next month, and return with everybody. Yeah, we flew a lot of hours, so you're going to have accidents. It's just realistically going to happen. But to be able to walk away with nobody seriously injured and bring everybody home is the most important thing." ■



(Above) An Apache electrical mechanic from 2nd Battalion, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, performs some last minute checks before the helicopter takes off for a test flight in Qayyarah West, Iraq. (Below) An AH-64D Apache helicopter from 2nd Battalion, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, takes off Q-West.



A country Thanksgiving

Aaron Tippin performs for troops

Sgt. Ryan Matson and Sgt. Dallas Walker
101st Combat Aviation Brigade and
101st Airborne Division

TIKRIT, Iraq -- Country music star Aaron Tippin, who crooned such hits as *Kiss This* and *You've Got to Stand for Something (Or You'll Fall for Anything)* spent his Thanksgiving with Soldiers of Task Force Band of Brothers at Forward Operating Base Speicher in Iraq.

Tippin started his visit with the Soldiers by eating Thanksgiving Dinner at the Eagle's Nest Dining Facility, where officers from the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade served up some turkey, crab legs, and all the traditional holiday fixings. He didn't do much eating, however, as he was approached by a steady stream of fans in the dining facility seeking autographs and pictures.

"Since you guys can't be home with your families for Thanksgiving, I don't mind being away from mine," Tippin said. "I just appreciate everything you guys do for us."

Tippin signed everything he could before heading on a tour of the 1st Battalion, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade flight line, where Soldiers gave him an up-close-and-personal look at an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter. Tippin, who said he is a

helicopter pilot himself, sat in the cockpit and was briefed on the various controls and features of the aircraft.

While at the flight line, Tippin again made sure every fan who wanted one got a picture and an autograph. Soldiers brought up guitars, CDs and various other items to be signed while Tippin, donning a black T-shirt with the 1st Battalion "Expect No Mercy" logo on it, signed them all.

At the flight line, one Soldier shook Tippin's hand and told him, "You're a great American, Sir!" Tippin looked at the Soldier as he walked away and said, "I think you may have that one backwards."

After spending a few hours with the Soldiers, Tippin departed the area to tour the rest of the installation, including the 101st Airborne Division headquarters, before his 8 p.m. performance at the installation gymnasium.

"I think it was good of him to take time out of his schedule to come visit us and show his support and patriotism," said Capt. Jason Shultz, battle captain for Task Force Band of Brothers. "He was very sincere. I think it meant more to him to be here with us for Thanksgiving."

Tippin performed an acoustic set at the installation gymnasium, kicking the show off with *You've Got to Stand for Something*. The backdrop for his performance was the Grand Ole Opry East, a division initiative to encourage other performers to entertain Soldiers.

He also included the most patriotic song in his catalog -- *Where Stars and Stripes and Eagles Fly* -- inspired by the events of 9/11.

"He told the story about the song 9/11 inspired him to write," Shultz said. "The story really motivated everyone."

After his performance, Maj. Gen. Thomas Turner, commander, Task Force Band of Brothers and 101st Airborne Division, presented Tippin with the Screaming Eagle statue to show the task force's appreciation for his visit.

Tippin was the first celebrity to entertain the Soldiers of Task Force Band of Brothers at FOB Speicher.

"He gave a very energetic performance," Shultz said. "You could tell he enjoyed performing for us." ■



photo by Spc. Jeanine Kinville

(Above) Country music singer Aaron Tippin performed for Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division and Task Force Band of Brothers Nov. 25 at the installation gymnasium on Forward Operating Base Speicher in Tikrit, Iraq. (Right) Tippin prepares to sign an autograph for a Soldier at the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade.



photo by Sgt. Ryan Matson

Thanksgiving Assault



(Above) Rakkasans from 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry enter the village of Talladhahad, Iraq, just after dawn on Thanksgiving morning. Operation Hue was conducted to capture a suspected arms dealer in the village just east of Bayji. (Right) An F-15 Strike Eagle passes overhead during the assault mission. (Bottom right) An intelligence analyst in 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry Regiment, occupies a security position outside a suspected insurgent's house.

Maj. Tom Bryant
3rd Brigade Combat Team
101st Airborne Division

BAYJI, Iraq -- Most Soldiers begin their Thanksgiving morning anticipating good food, family and football.

Then again, Rakkasans are not most Soldiers.

The War Rakkasans of 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry Regiment teamed with the Iraqi 20th Strategic Infrastructure Battalion in Operation Hue, an air assault cordon and search mission to capture a suspected arms dealer in Talladhahad.

In the pre-dawn darkness, troops from Company D, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry and the SIB isolated the village with blocking positions north and south of the village.

The dawn raid began with UH-60L Blackhawk helicopters sweeping over the Hamrin Mountains and Tigris River east of Bayji.

Apache gunships patrolling overhead provided close air support as the Soldiers landed and quickly moved to the target house and began their search.

After questioning several villagers, it was determined that the arms

dealer was not in the area. However, two of his close associates were detained for further questioning by Coalition Forces.

Once the search was completed, the Rakkasans were extracted and returned to Forward Operating Base Summerall -- in plenty of time to enjoy a hearty Thanksgiving lunch.

According to Capt. Jamey Turner, commander of Troop B, 1-33 Cavalry, the mission was a success in more than one respect, particularly the integration of Iraqi security forces.

"This is their country, and we plan on leaving at some point," Turner said. "The more we get the opportunity to work with them and show them what right looks like, the better off they are going to be in the future."

Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Crisostomo, the squadron intelligence NCOIC, agreed with Turner's assessment.

"It's very important to let the people of Iraq know they have an Army and that they are working with us to make [Iraq] better," Crisostomo said.

When asked about the irony of beginning a traditional holiday in such a non-traditional manner, Turner replied, "It sure beats watching Dallas and Detroit on Thanksgiving Day." ■



photos by Maj. Tom Bryant

Troops see changes in casevac exercise

Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills
1st Brigade Combat Team
3rd Infantry Division

TIKRIT, Iraq -- When the 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Brigade Troops Battalion was on Forward Operating Base Dagger, a small FOB just south of Tikrit, they were responsible for the medical evacuation and care of troops stationed there. It was a risky proposition, considering FOB Dagger was isolated and injured troops had to wait for casevac helicopters in order to receive treatment.

That all changed in late July when 1-3 BTB moved to FOB Speicher -- a logistics base and home to a combat support hospital. Those changes were most apparent at a mass casualty evacuation exercise Nov. 12.

"Lifesaving didn't change from Dagger," said Maj. Pamela Roof, physician assistant, 1-3 BTB. The way the injured are moved and sustained changed.

During the exercise, a number of Soldiers roll-playing as injured were found after a mock indirect fire attack near the 1st Brigade Combat Team headquarters building. The call went over the radio for help and a series of events were set into motion.

Soldiers certified as combat life savers quickly assembled at the 1-3 BTB troop medical clinic. Soldiers designated as non-standard ambulance drivers prepped their humvees to carry litters and brought them to the Troop Medical Clinic.

The team of Soldiers responded to the site of the attack and began organizing and prioritizing the injured Soldiers according to the extent of their injuries.

Some of the injured were put in humvees and sent directly to the hospital on FOB Speicher. Others were sent to the casualty collection point at the TMC.

According to Roof, the exercise went well, and the difference between be-

ing at FOB Dagger and FOB Speicher was marked.

"We didn't have to stabilize and wait for air. We could just take them to the CSH," Roof said. "If someone is urgent instead of going to the casualty collection point they are taken directly to the CSH."

Being at FOB Speicher has other advantages as well.

"[The procedure] changed dramatically because the fire department augmented us," Roof said.

Roof said that although a communication problem caused the fire department to show up later than they would normally, it was nice to have that asset available. In fact, Roof said, the Soldiers responded so quickly with treatment, triage and delivery of victims, that the fire department didn't have time to respond.

In the end, it comes down to basic lifesaving and this type of training only helps Soldiers improve their skills in a new environment. ■



photo by Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills

Major Pamela Roof, physicians assistant, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Brigade Troops Battalion, helps transport a mock injured Soldier during a mass casualty exercise on Forward Operating Base Speicher, Nov. 12.

Giving Back



photos by Spc. Michael Pfaff

(Above) Major Junade Ziad, the civil military officer for the Iraqi Army Cobra Battalion, cradles an Iraqi child after delivering stuffed animals and toys to her neighborhood schoolhouse. The gifts were supplied by Soldiers from the 451st Civil Affairs Company. (Below) Ziad hands a toy to one of the children at the school.



Iraqi Army performs civil affairs mission

Spc. Michael Pfaff

133rd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

KIRKUK, Iraq -- As infantrymen train the Iraqi Army for the transfer of security in Kirkuk, another group of Soldiers is showing the Iraqi troops another side of being a guardian of the citizens.

Reservists from the 451st Civil Affairs Company have been working with the Iraqi Army for the last few months to show the Soldiers how to perform civil operations with the public.

"Initially, they did not feel comfortable working with the public and leaving a good impression," said Maj. Harry Kim, general support team chief, 451st Civil Affairs. "But, after a few joint operations, the Iraqi Army now feels comfortable conducting operations within the public."

One part of the public that the Iraqi Army had particular trouble with was the children in the communities, Kim said. But, after spending time working with children, the Iraqi troops are becoming better at it.

"A lot of operations are conducted with children," Kim said. "And, now they are beginning to feel friendly toward the Iraqi Army in their neighborhood."

Garnering that friendship with the public has been a long road for the Iraqi Army, Kim said, but they are quickly moving toward a good civil presence within the communities.

On a recent goodwill mission, Soldiers from the 451st visited a neighborhood schoolhouse with the Iraqi Army. Stuffed animals and toys were supplied by 451st Soldiers and given to the children by the Iraqi Army Soldiers.

"We want to be out of the picture," said Sgt. Joseph Perez, team leader, 451st Civil Affairs. "We want to teach these people how to interact with the public, so we let them do the interaction. We're kind of like the guy behind the scenes."

Major Junade Ziad, the Iraqi Army brigade civil military officer, ran the operation.

"The Iraqi Army is now improving their public image," Kim said. "Especially, Maj. Ziad, who acts as our counterpart in the Iraqi Army."

At the schoolhouse, Ziad handed out toys to Christian and Muslim children alike. Ziad said he felt that the Iraqi Army made the children happy with the gifts.

"He is very good at dealing with the children and he works well with the media," Kim said. "He's been such a great help in accomplishing our mission, which is to get the Iraqi Army to stand on their own." ■

Traffic control



photo by Spc. Anna-Marie Risner

An Iraqi Army Soldier checks the identification of a driver entering a traffic control point in Kirkuk, Iraq, Nov. 23. Soldiers of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, worked with the IA to set up the control point.

Spc. Anna-Marie Risner

133rd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

KIRKUK, Iraq -- Since 9/11, random vehicle searches at military installations across the United States have become routine -- adding travel time for those headed to work.

But on the streets of Iraq, vehicle searches and traffic stops can mean the difference between life and death.

Soldiers with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, assisted Iraqi Army Soldiers in setting up and manning a traffic control point in Kirkuk, Iraq, Nov. 23. The point occupied a small stretch of road that has seen a considerable amount of terrorist activity in the week prior.

Staff Sgt. Chad Kuck, 2nd Squad leader, said many of the issues found during the day's mission had to do with identification. Iraqis are supposed to carry state-issued ID with them, regardless of whether they hold a government or mili-

tary-related position. Those in violation, mostly government officials or police officers from neighboring districts, were reminded of this policy before being sent on their way.

One Soldier noted, however, that despite not finding anything directly related to recent incidents, the group's show of force was just as important.

"It's good to show a presence out there," said Pvt. Brian Brown, Co. C, 2-327. "[It shows] we are going to be checking."

One reason for the joint mission was to continue training the Iraqi Army. Soldiers will be mentoring and monitoring the country's fighting forces over the next year. Another reason, according to Kuck, is to help instill self-reliance in the still-young military.

"They're more confident when we go out with them," he said. "[In addition], when we go out, we can see their strengths and weaknesses."

Kuck added that the Iraqi Soldiers have made drastic improvements in the years

since the Screaming Eagles left after Operation Iraqi Freedom I. He said one of the biggest strides has been in accountability of troops. Additionally, Kuck said the Soldiers who have stuck with the Army are here because they want to help Iraq further gain its independence.

Another benefit to training with the Iraqi Soldiers falls to Coalition Forces, Brown said. He noted that while American Soldiers teach Iraqis how to be a fighting force, the Iraqi troops teach U.S. forces about their culture, ways of life, and language, which may be the biggest barrier for some, but begins to wane as each side picks up words and phrases from the other.

Despite many differences, similarities between the groups abound, and are reflected with the successful completion of a mission. A tradition, it seems, many troops want to keep up.

"They want to help out their country and make it as peaceful as possible," Brown said, "and we're here doing the same." ■

Math teacher volunteers for deployment

Spc. Michael Pfaff
133rd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

KIRKUK, Iraq -- Somewhere near St. Louis, a group of middle school kids prepare a package of goodies for their former math teacher.

Before being deployed to Iraq, Sgt. David Capelli, a 42 year-old reservist with the 324th Tactical Psychological Operations Company, taught math in a middle school.

"They're great," Capelli said. "They send me emails and care packages."

After being out of the Army for 10 years, Capelli said he wanted to re-enlist in the reserves because he saw how the Army needed Soldiers.

"Somebody's got to step up and do it," Capelli said.

Capelli said he wasn't going to "re-up" unless he could deploy.

"The whole point of PsyOps units is

to deploy," Capelli said. "We're here to disseminate information to the people of Iraq."

Capelli said PsyOps uses a variety of methods, including pamphlets, loudspeakers and face to face greetings to get information out to the public.

"We actually go out and talk with these people in their homes and in the streets," Capelli said. "Face to face is the best way to get our messages out."

During his active duty days, Capelli was in a field artillery unit. Working with the citizens of Iraq is a far cry from field artillery, Capelli said. But having other experiences helps in his current mission.

"This job is all about understanding," Capelli said. "Every experience in your own life helps you understand a bit more."

Capelli said even his experience as a math teacher has helped him work with the Iraqi people.

"Just like teaching kids, you can't just tell people how to learn something," Capelli said. "You have to show them how to learn it."

By handing out flyers with emergency contact information, the PsyOps unit is now trying to show the people of Iraq that they have help if something happens to them, Capelli said.

"When we pass out the flyers, calls to the center skyrocket," Capelli said.

In addition to the flyers, the unit is also trying to encourage locals to become active in voting in the December elections.

"We don't tell them how to vote," Capelli said. "But we want them to join in on the Democratic process."

Capelli said he sees the Iraqi people moving forward, and that makes his job worth the effort.

"When you see that you're helping people, you see it in their eyes," Capelli said. "You see that it makes a difference." ■

Soldiers remembered, honored



photo by Spc. Natalie Loucks

(Above) Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team's 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, render honors at a Veteran's Day memorial ceremony for Sgt. 1st Class Alwyn Cashe and Capt. Joel Cahill at Forward Operating Base Wilson. (Right) Brigadier Gen. Michael Oates, 101st Airborne Division assistant division commander of operations, presents Sgt. Christopher DeFranco, his personal security officer assigned to Pathfinder Co., 4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, the Purple Heart Award and Combat Infantry Badge for his actions Nov. 2 in Ad Duluyah when their convoy was attacked with a rocket propelled grenade and small arms fire during a combat patrol.



photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Armstrong

Soldiers bring supplies, smiles to Iraqi children

Spc. Anna-Marie Risner
133rd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

YETHRIB, Iraq -- Many troops serving in Iraq spend their time hunting insurgents and tracking down those who wish to hurt Coalition Forces, but some Soldiers occasionally get the opportunity to show the people of Iraq another side of the military.

Soldiers with Company B, 3rd Forward Support Battalion and Troop A, 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, Fort Stewart, Ga., spent most of Nov. 10 getting to know children near the town of Yethrib, Iraq, at a school Cav troops opened earlier this year.

The Soldiers dropped off an assortment of supplies including notebooks, pencils, desks and shoes -- all of which were donated by FSB Soldiers' families.

"Back around the April or May time frame, [we decided] that we would try to adopt a school here in Iraq," said Capt. Kate Jackson, commander, Co. B, 3rd FSB. "Several Soldiers' parents got with their churches or other organizations they were involved with like their work, and they all collected up ... school supplies that these children could use."

Security for the mission was provided by 5-7th, commanded by Capt. Joel Jackson -- marking the first joint operation for the husband and wife. The operation came to



photos by Spc. Anna-Marie Risner

(Above) Lieutenant Col. William Boyett hands out candy to school children. Soldiers with 3rd Forward Support Battalion, and Troop A, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, spent the day dropping off supplies to an elementary school near the town of Yethrib, Iraq. (Below) Three Iraqi girls smile after receiving stuffed animals.

fruition when Joel discovered his wife had a plethora of school supplies, but no school to donate them to.

"I walked into my wife's office one day and she had all these school supplies and I've been wanting to do a school drop. This is one of the areas where I really needed to do something for the people," he said. "I asked her if she had a school lined up and she didn't, so it evolved from there."

Soldiers handed out bags of supplies, helped some children find new shoes for the cold months ahead, played games, and interacted with Iraq's younger generation -- a task many Soldiers feel is important to the country's success.

"It's great to be able to go out and meet the kids because the kids are the ones we're really trying to make an impact on," said Spc. Joseph Dupree, 5-7th Cav. "I know that if we can

interact with the kids and help them to like us, the future generations will be a lot more open and cooperative with the United States."

"It's all about the relationships that you can build ... for us to get out there and show that we do care and that we have a genuine interest in their well being," Kate said. "Whether it was just a sticker or it was us playing soccer with them, it lets them know that we do care."

The day wrapped up with a game of soccer between Soldiers and children, followed by good byes and thank-yous as tanks and trucks rolled out of sight. Leaders hope their actions today will make a lasting impact on the children and the town.

"By [the families] taking the time to send the supplies over here and us taking the time to go out and interact with the children and to play games with them, they know that we genuinely do care," Kate said. "At the national level, there's a lot of efforts going on, but to truly [be successful] it takes the boots on the ground, the daily interaction with them, and especially with the children ... hopefully that carries over to the other generations." ■



Family tradition

Spc. Joshua Hutcheson

101st Airborne Division
Public Affairs

TIKRIT, Iraq -- Being in the Army is a tradition in the Dawson family.

Chief Warrant Officer Angela Dawson, with 22 years in the Army, works in administration in the Human Resources Command, Fort Belvoir, Va. Her husband, Sgt. Maj. Russell Dawson, has been in the Army for 24 years and is the operations sergeant major for the 101st Airborne Division.

Three years ago, their daughter and only child, Spc. Christall Dawson, joined the Army as an administration specialist. On Nov. 11, she re-enlisted for another four years, keeping the tradition alive.

"I was strongly encouraged [to enlist]. I felt [my parents] knew what was best for me," Spc. Dawson said. "Although I wasn't sure that's what I wanted [then], now I'm sure that I wanted that move."

Her parents and grandparents helped her in her decision, and were pleased with the result.

"I'm ecstatic about it because the military gives you structure and helps you grow, as a Soldier," Sgt. Maj. Dawson said. "We wanted her to get that stability to be able to function on her own before she goes off to college. I wanted her to have the advantages and jump-start in life to start her on the right path."

Specialist Dawson re-enlisted to become a dental technician, a job she feels will help her in the future, whether she is in the Army, or not.

"[The job change] was for personal progression. I really wanted to do something in the medical field, and it was either get out and go to school or stay and see what the Army had to offer," she said.

The youngest Dawson was re-enlisted in a ceremony by her boss, in front of a group of coworkers, friends and family.

"It's always great when you can re-enlist Soldiers into the Army, especially quality Soldiers, and Dawson is a quality Soldier," said Lt. Col. Pat Kerbuski, personnel officer in charge, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 501st Special Troops Battalion, who did the re-enlistment. "It's a great day when you can have a father, a sergeant major, come and watch his daughter, a specialist, re-enlist in a combat zone."

Her father is also happy about her commitment to four more years in the military.

"I'm still ecstatic about her going into the medical field. There's always a job in that field [in the private sector]," he said. "I believe the medical field will give her more of an advantage in the medical community."

Specialist Dawson says her mother is also glad about the re-enlistment.

"She's ecstatic, just like my father," Dawson said with a chuckle. "They know that I'm going to get a good experience in this new [Military Occupational Specialty] and she's really proud of me."

The aspiring dental technician does not have grand plans



photo by Spc. Joshua Hutcheson

Sergeant Maj. Russell Dawson, operations sergeant major, 501st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, and his daughter, Spc. Christall Dawson, personnel clerk, also in the 501st, pose together after Spc. Dawson's re-enlistment.

for her future -- she likes to keep things simple.

"Hopefully, I'll finish school and convert over to a dental clinic that is civilian, and work on a military base. That would satisfy me," she said. "I don't have a big dream of anything extreme, just to do a good job and hope I'm helping somebody."

Until that time when Spc. Dawson takes the skills and training she received from the Army out into the civilian world, she will make sure to keep focused on her job and do her best in her new job.

"I will be able to continue to help Soldiers out, and get experience," she said. "I'm really excited about it. It's the best of both worlds." ■



HUTCH'S TOP 10

Top 10 things to look for in a Christmas care package

by Spc. Joshua Hutcheson

10. About 8 million pieces of loose candy, much of it stuff you don't like. Half of it people will happily take, the other half you couldn't get rid of to save your life.
9. More than enough wet wipes to clean up the droppings after eight reindeer land on your chu roof.
8. A pseudo-covert military book about Lt. Beef Squarejaw, or something similarly goofy, who single-handedly saves America from World War III by filing more TPS Reports than the cyber-terrorists had counted on! Naturally, this book will be filled with ridiculous amounts of military jargon, most of which you've never heard of, and will have been written by a civilian who's only military experience is having watched a bunch of MASH episodes.
7. The only confirmed weapon of mass destruction: a fruitcake.
6. Matching hand-knitted scarf and mittens sent by a relative who doesn't quite understand the weather in the desert.
5. A Christmas card that's supposed to be humorous and wacky, but kind of just leaves you feeling empty inside.
4. Three month-old magazines full of information that's incredibly stale by the time it gets to you, but is still stuff you didn't know... ("Britney Spears had a baby? Wild!")
3. Coal -- at least that's what I always get!
2. Something you asked for four months ago from a lazy friend who's just now sending it, like suntan lotion or bug spray.
1. Who cares? At least you're getting something!

Specialist Ted Trenary and Pfc. Kevin Tirserio, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, launch the Raven from Forward Operations Base McHenry, Iraq, to scan Route Trans-Am for IEDs Nov. 30.



photo by Tech Sgt. Andy Dunaway

BOB ON THE FOB

by SGT Albert J. Merrifield



geardo n. (gēr'·dō)

1. One who spends at least 50% of each paycheck (before taxes) on the latest & greatest gear, just to have the latest and greatest gear, regardless of whether or not that gear will actually help the wearer perform his/her duties. Often closely related to the *fobbit*.



TASK FORCE BAND of BROTHERS IN MEMORIAM

*Once firmly grounded upon this earth,
these Screaming Eagles now soar in brighter skies.*

November 8

Sgt. 1st Class Alwyn C. Cashe, 35
1st Battallion, 15th Infantry
Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division
Oviedo, Fla.

November 15

Staff Sgt. James E. Estep, 26
1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery
Regiment, 101st Airborne Division
Leesburg, Fla.

Spc. Matthew J. Holley, 21
1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery
Regiment, 101st Airborne Division
San Diego, Calif.

Spc. Alexis Roman-Cruz, 33
1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery
Regiment, 101st Airborne Division
Brandon, Fla.

Pfc. Travis J. Grigg, 24
1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery
Regiment, 101st Airborne Division
Inola, Okla.

November 17

Cpl. Vernon R. Widner, 34
3rd Special Troops Battalion,
3rd Brigade Combat Team,
101st Airborne Division
Redlands, Calif.

November 18

Pfc. Anthony A. Gaunky, 19
3rd Special Troops Battalion,
3rd Brigade Combat Team,
101st Airborne Division
Sparta, Wis.

November 19

1st Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, 23
1st Battalion, 187th Infantry
Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat
Team, 101st Airborne Division
Freehold, N.J.

Staff Sgt. Edward Karolasz, 25
1st Battalion, 187th Infantry
Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat
Team, 101st Airborne Division
Powder Springs, N.J.

Cpl. Jonathan F. Blair, 21
1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regi-
ment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team,
101st Airborne Division
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Spc. Dominic J. Hinton, 24
1st Battalion, 187th Infantry
Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat
Team, 101st Airborne Division
Jacksonville, Texas

Spc. Michael J. Idanan, 21
1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry,
3rd Brigade Combat Team,
101st Airborne Division
Chula Vista, Calif.

December 3

Cpl. Jimmy L. Shelton, 21
1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry
Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat
Team, 101st Airborne Division
Lehigh Acres, Fla.

(These are the names that have been released as of Dec. 9)