

Danger

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Forward

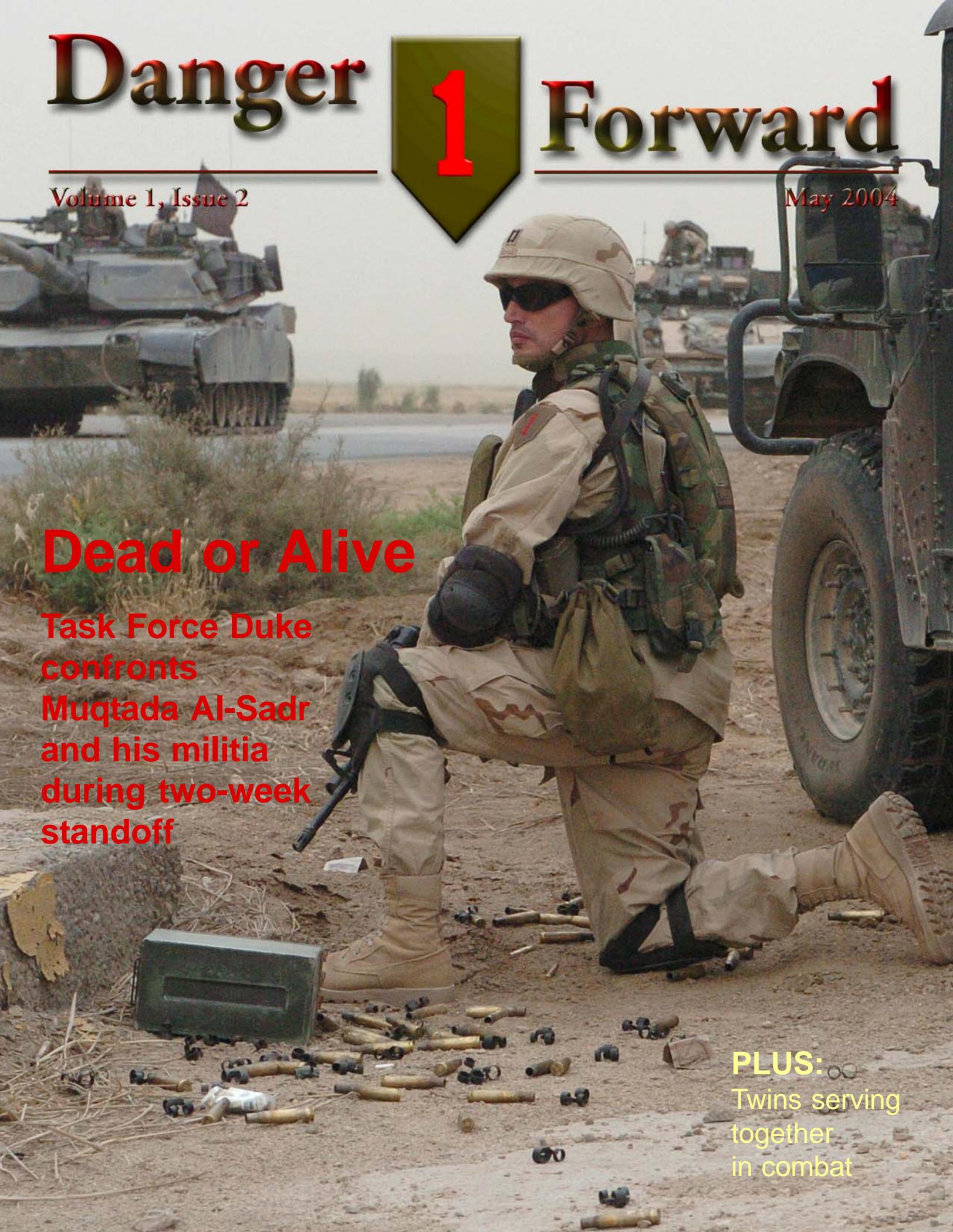
Volume 1, Issue 2

May 2004

Dead or Alive

Task Force Duke
confronts
Muqtada Al-Sadr
and his militia
during two-week
standoff

PLUS:
Twins serving
together
in combat





CONSTRUCTION

One bulldozer shadows another through the dust as Task Force Teambuilder South Soldiers build an earthen berm around an under-construction detention center at Forward Operating Base Duke on April 12. The task force is comprised of engineers from the 216th Engineer Battalion, the 144th Engineer Battalion and the 264th Engineer Group.

On the cover

HHC, 3rd Brigade Operations officer, CPT Patric A. Nichols of Moline, Ill. pulls security after a patrol was ambushed outside An Najaf April 16.

Photo by SPC Kimberly Snow

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MESSAGE FROM DANGER SIX

My message this month to the Soldiers and family members of the 1st Infantry Division Combat Team is that the mission continues to a very high standard and that our sacrifices will have an enormous impact on Iraq, the Middle East, and the security of the United States.

The performance of the division during the upsurge in Sunni and Shia violence in April was magnificent and I remain impressed with our collective ability to attack the enemy with precision based on predictive intelligence.

Without a doubt, the enemy fears us and the good people of Iraq respect us. We are turning the corner on stability operations by improving Iraqi infrastructure and quality of life. The first of many projects to improve Iraqi water, sewage, and electricity capacity is beginning to put Iraq's back to work.

We are hard at work to improve the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, police, and border patrol with respect to equipping and training to set the conditions for long term self-sufficiency. We are focused on improving Iraqi oil and power production and distribution infrastructure in Kirkuk and Baiji, both critical as we build a free and democratic Iraq. Bottom line, our soldiers are very good at the simultaneity of this mission.

On the one hand, we conduct deliberate combat operations to kill or capture the enemy, and at the same time, we conduct stability and support operations to set the conditions for Iraqi self-reliance. It is a complex mission and we have assembled the



MG JOHN R. S. BATISTE

right team to get it done.

The mission has cost us dearly. Our thoughts and prayers are with our comrades who have given their full measure. We grieve with their families. The 1st Infantry Division honors our fallen comrades and their incredible sacrifice. We are encouraged by their commitment and courage.

At the same time, CSM McCarty and I see nothing but steadfast resolve. No one is backing down. We are tough, dedicated, and tenacious. Not one of our great soldiers has died in vain. When the going gets tough, we get going and there is no more capable division than the Big Red One. We will accomplish this mission.

Soldiers and family members can all be proud of what we are accomplishing. Our hard work and sacrifices will profoundly impact stability in the Middle East and the security of the United States.

I urge you all to see the new 1st Infantry Division web site at www.1id.army.mil and read the biweekly press releases under the public affairs folder. We are all part of something very big, something much bigger than ourselves. I have never served with a better or more capable team. It is truly an honor to serve our great nation with the soldiers

and families of the 1st Infantry Division. God bless you all as we continue this important mission.

-Danger 6

MESSAGE FROM DANGER SEVEN

We are now well into our second month of responsibility for our Area of Operation in Iraq. Our team is set, and we are a force capable of decisive combat actions when required and a force capable of developing and implementing civic actions to improve the quality of life for the Iraqi people. Our team's strength is measured by its diversity, professionalism, and ceaseless drive to accomplish our mission.

There are other members of this great Task Force that go unnoticed. Many are behind the scenes, not in combat or rebuilding civic infrastructures, but just as important as the ones who do. Some of them are listed below.

The 1st Infantry Division Association

Members of the 1st Infantry Division Association visit our soldiers who are receiving care at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. The association maintains records of troops killed in action, and will have their names placed on an Operation Iraqi Freedom stone at the 1st Infantry Division Monument in Washington, D.C.

Representatives from the organization also visit soldiers and their families and ensure that the needs of the troops' relatives are addressed, regardless of where they are in the United States.

Unit Rear Detachments

Our Rear Detachments are leaning forward in the foxhole, requesting and gathering information so they can keep our families and units informed. They maintain



CSM CORY MCCARTY

our units and systems so that upon our return there will not be a large degradation in our normal operations.

The Rear Detachments' No. 1 task is informing and assisting our families regardless if you are married or single. Mission accomplishment is not one soldier on a combat patrol worrying about his family.

Our families and friends back home

Here is a letter sent to us from a high school student in New Mexico:

You guys seriously rock my world. I am amazed at the amount of courage you all have and the size of your hearts - fighting for so many people whose names you don't even know. Well, my name is Judi and I am following your journey religiously. Good luck and God speed. You are all in my prayers.

-Judith Marie

Hopefully you realize that we are not in this battle alone. There are millions on our team. They may not be in the cab of your truck sitting next to you on the next Combat Patrol, but rest assured, we have their support and they are with us in thought and prayer. Remain Focused! Remain Disciplined! Remain Big Red One!!

DUTY FIRST!

-Danger 7

Opposite page

From top left, clockwise: 2LT Matt White and SPC Matthew Kruppa, both of B Company, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment prepare to post security in their Abrahms tank at a remote location March 23.

A Bradley Fighting Vehicle driven by Soldiers of Task Force 2-2 keep watch for any suspicious activity while traveling through a village near Foward Operating Base Duke, near An Najaf April 13.

PFC Torres, left, PFC Brod and PFC Harris of 1-14 Infantry Battalion, 2nd BCT, 25th ID watch for suspicious activity while their fellow soldiers

conduct a vehicle check point near Foward Operating Base Duke near An Najaf April 16.

PFC Ricky Hinote, 2nd Platoon, Charlie Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment looks for suspected mines on Iraqi farmland March 21. (Photo by PFC Brandi Marshall)

A soldier from C. Co., 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment provides security during an early morning raid of a suspected Al-Sadr militia training camp and weapon's cache outside the holy city of An Najaf April 16. (Photo by SPC Kimberly Snow)



PFC Brandi Marshall



PFC Elizabeth Erste



PFC Elizabeth Erste





SPC Kimberly Snow



SPC Kimberly Snow

Clockwise from top: SSG Jason J. McKillip, an infantryman with HHC, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, conducts a flash checkpoint during a day of operations outside An Najaf April 16.

An Iraqi girl from the town of Khalis gives soldiers from 2nd Platoon, A Company, 2nd Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment the "thumbs-up" as they rolled through town in armored personnel carriers April 3.

SSG Dalton, B Company, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 25th ID keeps watch while at a security halt during a day patrol near FOB Duke near An Najaf April 13.

PFC Alain J. Castro, infantryman with C. Co., 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment provides force security following an early morning raid of a suspected Al-Sadr militia training camp and weapon's cache April 16. (Photo by SPC Kimberly Snow)

SPC Allen G. Siebert, gunner, B Company, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, performs mortar crew drills April 12 at FOB Duke in preparation for Operation Duke Fortitude. (Photo by SPC Kimberly Snow)



PFC Elizabeth Erste





PFC Elizabeth Erste



PFC Elizabeth Erste



SPC Kimberly Snow

Clockwise from top: An Iraqi policeman, left, listens as Qassim Mohammed, the interpreter, translates a question asked by Soldiers of B Company, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, 25th ID during a patrol of the area around FOB Duke near An Najaf April 13.

PFC Branham, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, 25th Infantry Division keeps watch during a patrol of the area around FOB Duke near An Najaf April 16.

A Spanish armored personnel carrier transports coalition troops near FOB Hotel April 18.

SSG Gallagher of A Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment applies camoflage paint to his face in preparation for a night patrol of the area surrounding Ad Dujayl April 30. The unit is out of New York and stationed at Forward Operating Base O'Ryan. (Photo by PFC Elizabeth Erste)

PFC Akard, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, 25th ID looks at Sadr propaganda while Qassim Mohammed translates the writing at a vehicle check point during a patrol of the area around FOB Duke near An Najaf April 16. (Photo by PFC Elizabeth Erste)



Army center helps local Iraqis gain employment

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC SHERREE CASPER
196TH MPAD

As part of its efforts to help the Iraqi people become self-reliant, the 1st Infantry Division opened a Civil Military Information Center here in March.

The Big Red One's two main objectives for the CMIC are to provide security for the region and help the local governments govern themselves, officials said. The center also addresses issues and locals' complaints, and serves as an employment office of sorts where military officials meet and hire Iraqi contractors.

"The Army has done a great deal to fix the civilian problems in the absence of (an Iraqi) government," said CPT Tim S. Crowe, head of operations at the CMIC and civil military operations officer for 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment.

"We are trying more and more to get Iraqis to help solve problems for themselves," he said. "We want to make the police department better so they can police themselves so we don't have to."

The CMIC is comprised of four agencies: Task Force 1-18, 415th Civil Affairs Battalion, 2nd Brigade Legal Team and the Coalition Provisional Authority. The CPA is charged with manning the civilian portion of the center.

"We work together if the other has issues," Crowe said of how the civilian and military sections at the information center complements one another.

Under the 4th Infantry Division, the CMIC was located within the City of Tikrit. The 1st ID, on the other hand, opted to open the center on FOB Danger to allow for a more central location for soldiers and civilians assigned there. Security was also a factor in the decision to move, Crowe said.

Officials at the CMIC cannot solve everyone's problems, but Crowe said he's confident Iraqis can be "steered in the right direction." For instance, Crowe received a letter concerning a pay problem at a local hospital. Instead of the matter being handled by the country's Ministry of Health, the Iraqi man sought help from the CMIC.

Many Iraqis in the area also go to the center for compensation for damaged property, said CPT Eric D. Magnell, 2nd Brigade Trial Counsel from Headquarters and Headquarters Company who settles the claims. The majority of his cases are for vehicle accidents, he said.

While the United States is not required to reimburse the locals, the 31-year-old Woodbridge, Va., native said doing so strengthens ties between the people and coalition forces.

"We do it to show good faith with the locals," Magnell said.

Money used to compensate the locals and rebuilding comes from the 1st ID Commander's Emergency Relief Program. It was established by the fiscal year 2004 Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations.

Future CERP-funded projects include establishing regional vocational trade schools, improving basic industry structure and capability, and lowering the un-



An interpreter explains to CPT Tim S. Crowe, who oversees the Civilian Military Information Center, what help an Iraq man needs.

employment rate.

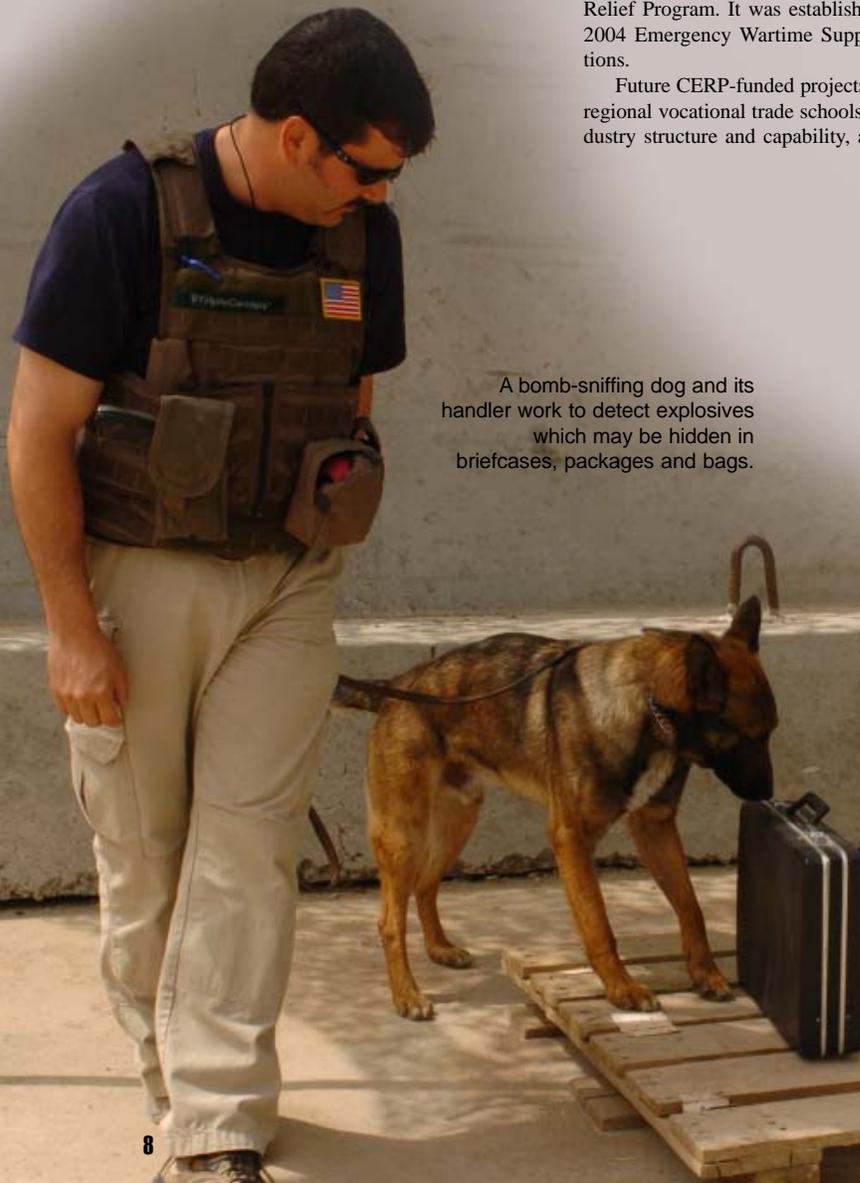
"We like to say that everyone is a contractor in Iraq," said Crowe, adding that while unemployment in the country is a major problem, he hasn't seen anyone who needs immediate help.

Those seeking assistance within the walls of the CMIC are run through a gauntlet of security. They are searched and escorted to their meetings within the center.

Bomb-sniffing dogs are employed to ensure extra protection from those bringing packages, bags and briefcases onto the military compound.

About 100 people are escorted daily along a 150 meter path lined with jersey barriers after being assigned badges, said 2LT Christopher J. Fiorentino, officer-in-charge of the search team.

SGT Damon M. McGibboney of the 4-3 ADA, searches an Iraqi before he enters the CMIC.



A bomb-sniffing dog and its handler work to detect explosives which may be hidden in briefcases, packages and bags.





Visitors to the Civilian Military Information Center at Forward Operating Base Danger in Tikrit are escorted into the facility on March 30.

American trained Iraqi officers graduate, patrol Salah Ad Din streets

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT ROLAND G. WALTERS
196TH MPAD**

Nearly 70 new Iraqi Police officers began patrolling Salah Ad Din Province neighborhoods after graduating from the Tikrit Police Academy in April.

The course is part of the U.S. supervised Training Integration Program – TIP – that is being taught throughout Iraq by the U.S. military. Its intent is to teach Iraqis how to police themselves once the transition of authority occurs in June, said LTC Latanya Lynn, the 1st Infantry Division’s Provost Marshall. The program has been in place for about 10 months, and is expanding, officials said.

Last month’s class was the 10th to graduate from the three-week course, which is designed for Iraqis with previous police experience. It is supervised by the 2nd Battalion, 197th Military Police Company, a New Hampshire Army National Guard unit that’s attached to the 11D.

In addition to teaching police techniques and tactics, instructors hold discussions with students about democracy and western culture, said 1LT Robert E. Teague of the 2-197th Military Police Company. He’s the TIP acting commandant.

Human rights and international law are the cornerstone of the program, he said. The majority of the course deals with ethics, Teague said. It also teaches proper



Salah Ad Din Province Police Chief Mohammed Hajeed Mezher (right) presents a diploma to a graduating Iraqi police officer.

weapons use and maintenance, detaining criminals and filling out police reports.

“I notice a difference between the police that go through the training and the ones that didn’t before,” said Sama, a 36 year law enforcement veteran who did not give his name. “The TIP officers know how to deal with the people, how to respect them.”

Teaching officers to respect civilians and treat everybody fairly is a better way of policing, Teague said. The policemen realize that they serve the people of Iraq by detaining criminals and focusing on protecting the rights of citizens, he said.

Past training was limited to basic military training, said Abbas Altikrity, a veteran police officer. Students were only taught how to salute, march and use weapons.

“Now they learn new information, about democracy, freedom and how to treat people,” Altikrity said.

A new academy has been built in Tikrit, and is designed to handle a class of 225 recruits. International Police Advisors were brought in for the next class. They will focus on ways to instruct more students while maintaining the same quality of training, Teague said.

“Their experience will complement what is being done here as they work alongside the Iraqi instructors” he said, adding that an eight week course for people with no prior police experience is a future goal of the program.

“I hope there will be more (specialized training), and I am happy that a new academy has been built for the police,” Sama said.



Left: An Iraqi police officer inspects a visiting officer at the security check point, before allowing the visitor in the compound.
Bottom: 1LT Robert E. Teague, right, overseeing the TIP’s program, shakes hands with the Tikrit station’s police chief.



First BCT Soldiers awarded infantry, medic badges

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC DAVID C. DYER
196TH MPAD

CAMP JUNCTION CITY, AR RAMADI, Iraq -- 1st Brigade Combat Team Soldiers were awarded combat patches, Combat Infantryman and Combat Medic's Badges during a ceremony held here on April 24.

LTG Thomas F. Metz, Commander of III Corps and MG John R. S. Batiste, Commander of the 1st Infantry Division, were on hand to present the badges to the soldiers.

The Combat Infantryman's Badges were presented by Batiste while the Combat Medic's Badges were presented by Metz. Both gave the troops their Big Red One combat patches.

The badge presentation was as exciting an experience as helping the Iraqi people, soldiers said.

"It's something that does not happen every day and it's great to be a part of this," said SPC Cristina Tomsic of the 331st Signal Company. "I like being (in Iraq) and seeing what goes on outside the United States. (The Iraqi people) need our help, and I will be out here as long as they need me. I am happy to be here."

While only a handful of soldiers earned the CIB and CMB, the entire brigade was given the Big Red One's combat patch to indicate that they've served in a combat zone.

The ceremony lasted less than an hour, but the accomplishments of the individual soldiers and the 1st BCT will not be forgotten. The Brigade, which is assigned to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, killed 132 insurgents and wounded 53 others within the first seven months of its deployment.

The soldiers also detained more than 1,500 enemy combatants, which included eight high-value targets. Also, the troops found 47 mortars and 543 small arms, most of which were destroyed.

Additionally, the Brigade disarmed or destroyed more than 284 improvised explosive devices and found some 300 weapons and munitions caches.

Only soldiers assigned to units that actively participate in or support ground combat operations against hostile forces in combat zones are authorized to wear a combat patch. Wearing the combat patch is a tradition the Army started during World War II.

SPC Johnathan Mitchell, a medic with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, earned both the CIB and the Combat Medic's Badge.

"I feel that we deserve it," he said.



Right: LTG Thomas F. Metz, center, pins a Combat Medic's Badge on a 1st Brigade Combat Team Soldier.

Bottom right: 1st ID patches and badges on display prior to being awarded to soldiers.

Below: MG John R.S. Batiste, left, salutes a soldier after presenting him with a Combat Infantry Badge and Combat Patch.



Task Force Duke confronts Sadr, militia

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC KIMBERLY SNOW
196TH MPAD

In the week leading up to the Easter holiday, violence erupted throughout Iraq as coalition forces battled insurgents spurred on by 30-year-old Shi'ite cleric, Muqtada Al-Sadr. The young cleric laid siege to the holy city of An Najaf, taking over government and police buildings, and warning coalition forces to stay out.

In response, CJTF-7 quickly assembled Task Force Duke, and on the eve of Easter Sunday, began a large-scale intra-theater move, taking the brigade-size force south to a new forward operating base 28 kilometers outside the holy city - a feat that hadn't been attempted since the Vietnam War. The task force was comprised of about 2,800 soldiers from units throughout the country, the majority coming from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment; 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment; and 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment.

They moved from bases as far north as Mosul to a new FOB just south of the holy city with as little as 36 hours notice, and with the expectation that they could be there for 30 to 60 days. At one point, they were told they could stay up to six months, said Task Force Duke Commander, COL Dana J.H. Pittard. While a number of Soldiers from 1-14 Infantry were flown in on CH-47 "Chinook" helicopters, the majority rolled in on convoys lasting up to 36 hours.

About 325 vehicles, including eight tanks, 25 Bradley Fighting Vehicles and 77 Strikers, transported the troops, who faced detours from blown bridges and attacks from insurgents using rocket-propelled grenades, small arms and improvised explosive devices.

The movement itself, said Pittard, was very important. "Demonstrating the capability within CJTF-7 to move a brigade-size force from one location to another, around 300 kilometers, was a tremendous achievement," he said. "And it was done by our soldiers very quickly."

The Soldiers lived in austere conditions - there were no showers and none of the dining or MWR facilities that can be found on most established FOBs here - but remained positive.

"We have pretty high morale considering the conditions; it's hot and dusty," said SPC Allen Siebert, a mortarman from B. Co, 1-14 Infantry. "We had a water shortage, and we were rationed two bottles of water a day. That was kind of bad, but now we've got supplies and everybody's pretty happy."

ISG Brian L. Whelan, from C. Co., 201st Forward Support Battalion, explained that a logistics feed network was set up from FOBs Warhorse and Anaconda. He praised the hard work of SFC Craig W. Shields, saying he stayed up late almost every night to get the supply lines running and accomplish the mission.

Shields, a track vehicle mechanic from HHC, 201st FSB, coordinated all classes of supply for the task force. He said food, water and ammo were the most important

issues. "We took a lot of people from a lot of different places," he said. "Everybody was committed to doing what they needed to do and everything just fell together."

The purpose of the move was to establish a presence in An Najaf, a city important from a tactical, operational and strategic level, said Pittard, and to defeat Sadr and his militia. He added that the operation, if not conducted properly, could have worldwide implications.

The long-term goal, he said, was to assist the people of An Najaf and restore government. But the optimal solution would be "an Iraqi solution, not a coalition-imposed solution."

The soldiers of Task Force Duke, a force that was actually larger at the time than the force around Fallujah, spent less than two weeks at their new FOB. However, they accomplished a number of things in a very short time, said Pittard.

"The very fact that a force of that size was that close to the holy city of An Najaf, caused Al-Sadr's militia to back off from the government locations in An Najaf," he said.

He explained that their presence also spurred negotiations between Al-Sadr and coalition forces, as well as between Al-Sadr and Grand Ayatollah Ali Husaini Sistani, one of the Shi'ites most powerful and respected clerics.

"Sistani has been a calming influence, (Shi'ites) see him as their spiritual leader," said Pittard. "He has asked Al-Sadr and his militia to please leave the holy sites."

Although coalition forces agreed not to enter the holy city, troops began conducting daily patrols and operations on the outskirts of the city shortly after arriving at FOB Duke.

"Conducting offensive operations outside the towns of An Najaf and Kufa has shown that we can move a significant size force, get in position and conduct operations of our own choosing and our own will whenever we want," said 1-14 Infantry Operations Officer, MAJ Richard Heyward.

The 1-14 Infantry's first major patrol was a leader's reconnaissance of their area of operations - the eastern side of the Euphrates River. Their next large-scale operation, conducted by C. Co. 1-14 Infantry and C. Co., 2-63 Armor's quick reaction force, began with a raid on a suspected Al-Sadr militia training site and weapon's cache, followed by an armor reconnaissance through the town of Abbas. There, he said, they identified the position of the police station and set up a couple of snap traffic control points.

"The general feel from the populace was that Al-Sadr and his militia are not wanted here," said Heyward. "They've been living in oppression for 35 years and all they want to do is farm, make some money, raise their families and move on with their lives."

Less than two weeks after moving into their new AO, soldiers of Task Force Duke turned over operations to the 1st Armor Division and 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

Although many Task Force Duke Soldiers said they were disappointed with the decision to hand over operations, most felt like they had made a difference. "I don't think we've lived up to our full potential, but I know that we have had an impact," said SSG Christopher Wessling from 1-14 Infantry. "I'm hoping that the people of An Najaf will now have a safe and secure environment and that they can live peacefully."

LTG Sanchez, on an April 20 visit to FOB Duke, told troops that they were needed elsewhere and thanked them for their flexibility.

"There is no other Army in the world that can accomplish what you have accomplished," he said. "But if we launch you into An Najaf, we'll create unintended backlash throughout the rest of the country. That's the balance we must maintain. (Al-Sadr) knows you are here and he knows your capabilities."

One soldier asked Sanchez what they could expect in the near future.

"How about more fighting?" he replied.

The soldiers responded with a resounding "Hooah!"

Charlie Co., 1st Bn., 14th Infantry Reg.
Soldiers question a detainee during an early morning raid of a suspected Al-Sadr militia training camp and weapon's cache April 16.



3RD Brigade Combat Team's raids foil assassination plot

STORY AND PHOTO
BY SPC KIMBERLY SNOW
196TH MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARHORSE, Iraq — "If you're an enemy of peace in Diyala, you need to go now. Or we'll get you."

The message, sent from the 1st Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade Combat Team Commander, Col. Dana J.H. Pittard, to terrorists and insurgents operating in Diyala province, was clear. It was backed up with a series of raids beginning in the week following the transition of authority from the 4th Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team to the 1st ID's 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

For Pittard, one of the raids was both "interesting and personal."

The goal of the March 22nd afternoon raid in Kanan was to capture several members of the area command cell, east of the Zarqawi network. Soldiers were also searching for a car bomb believed to be filled with 900 pounds of explosives. What made it personal for the colonel was that the bomb was meant for him.

"One of (the targets) was involved in a car bombing plot to assassinate the Governor of Diyala and myself," he said. "We found the car and we got the bad guys, so that particular cell is out of commission. But based on past history, we expect it to regenerate in about a month."

Pittard labeled the operation, carried out by soldiers of Task Force 82nd Engineers in cooperation with Iraqi police, a success. All targets were captured, as well as the red truck that was to be used in the attempt. The explosives, however, were not recovered.

Although he expected an assassination attempt -- a \$50,000 bounty had been placed on the brigade commander's head -- he said he was struck by the accuracy of information and detail involved in the plot. The insurgents knew his schedule and had an accurate description of his vehicle.

"And how they were going to do it struck me as almost alarming," he said. "That it would be a suicide bomber; someone would give their life just to kill me and the Governor of Diyala."

Far from causing the 3rd Brigade commander to back off, however, he said it only strengthened his resolve.

On March 24, this resolve was apparent. Elements from FOBs Anaconda, Warhorse and Gator launched a large scale raid against an even more important target, a regional command cell of the Zarqawi network, said Pittard. The regional command cell covers roughly all of Ba'qubah and the surrounding areas.

The mission, which kicked off in the predawn hours, utilized air and ground assets from the three forward operating bases. The target was a 25-building compound in western Diyala Province. The intelligence leading to the raid was gathered primarily through informants and surveillance, said Pittard.

"We captured and or detained everyone except the number one guy," said Pittard. "We got number two and number three, but not the number one guy. But (he) is



A soldier from 1st Battalion, 6th Artillery Regiment guards detainees during an early morning raid April 6.

going to be so busy hiding that he won't be very effective for a while."

SSG Arturo Gutierrez of F Troop, 1st Battalion, 4th Cavalry Regiment was one of the soldiers tasked with clearing and securing the compound's main building. It was the first raid for Gutierrez and several other soldiers on his team. He said they captured about nine personnel.

"It went very well. Our team was prepared for it," he said. "We trained for it and we were on our game."

The soldiers obtained documents, currency and various types of intelligence from the compound along with English text books and documents written in near perfect English.

"This guy's no mud farmer," one soldier was overheard saying.

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the suspected ring leader of the insurgent network, is a 38-year-old Jordanian national with suspected links to al-Qaeda. He is a suspect in a string of suicide bombings in Iraq and was sentenced to death in his home country of Jordan for attacks against U.S. and Israeli tourists there. He has also been named as a suspect in numerous other attacks, including bombings in Casablanca, Morocco and Istanbul, Turkey.

The U.S. has offered a \$10 million reward for information leading to his capture or death. "I won't be happy until the entire Zarqawi network in our area is taken down," said Pittard.

American hostage bolts to freedom, rescued by New York National Guard platoon

STORY BY
SPC ISMAIL TURAY JR
196TH MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, Iraq — At first, 2LT Joseph A. Merrill and his platoon of New York Army National Guardsmen did not recognize the bearded man yelling as he ran toward them during their Sunday morning patrol in Balad.

Perhaps it was a local farmer, or an insurgent, they thought. Typically, the troops would have pointed their rifles in his direction since they did not know who he was.

However, the soldiers of Charlie Company, 3rd platoon, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment noticed that he did not have a weapon.

"I'm an American," he shouted, the soldiers said. "I'm an American POW."

The man, it turned out, was Thomas Hamill, the Mississippi dairy farmer who was kidnapped early last month. He had been working in Iraq as a Kellogg, Brown & Root contractor.

"He was elated to see us. He had a feeling of relief on his face," said Merrill, the platoon leader.

The medics immediately treated a wound Hamill

sustained on his arm when his convoy was attacked and he was taken into captivity April 9. The soldiers searched the area and arrested two Iraqis who are suspected to have been involved in the kidnapping.

Hamill was given food and water. He was flown for treatment to a military hospital in Germany Monday.

He was being held in a guarded, one room mud hut in the isolated farming community. The structure, which had no locks, was jammed shut with a sheet of metal and a wooden stick, the troops said.

The guard must have dropped his AK-47 and abandoned his post when he saw the soldiers patrolling the area on foot and in a humvee, Merrill said — their mission was provide security for a group of civilians who were repairing a damaged fuel pipeline.

When Hamill heard the humvee's engine, he "figured this was his only chance to get out," Merrill said. That's when Hamill, who was not bound, dashed out of the hut.

"We feel great about it," Merrill said of rescuing Hamill. "We were doing what 130,000 other soldiers are trained to do. Mr. Hamill found us more than we found him."

Shortly after he was kidnapped, Hamill's captors

threatened to kill him if Marines did not pull out of Fallujah. But they eventually fed him and treated his wounds, he told authorities.

Hamill, 43, is a resident of Macon Miss., a town of 2,500 people. Prior to accepting the job as a fuel truck driver with Kellogg, Brown & Root, he sold his dairy business after struggling for years to keep it afloat. He planned to use his salary of up to \$120,000 to payoff debts, which he built up after years of trying to run the dairy business his father and uncle started, according to media reports.

During a press conference announcing Hamill's rescue, Merrill and his soldiers were commended by their commander.

"I speak for every soldier in the 1st Infantry Division in saying that we are extremely proud to have the professionals from Charlie Company, 2nd of the 108th Infantry fighting on our team," Col. Randal Dragon, commander of the 1st Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, said of the platoon.

"Due to the effort of these soldiers standing with me today, an American will return home to his family. Freedom is priceless."

— Information from the *Los Angeles Times* and *CNN.com* was used in this report.

Task Force Dango

Najaf at Night

Clockwise from left: PFC John A. Bandy of A Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, talks with headquarters while two soldiers pull security during a patrol south of FOB Duke near An Najaf April 15.

PFC Jeremy C. McCullough of A Company 2-2 Infantry watches for suspicious activity during a patrol south of FOB Duke outside An Najaf April 15.

PFC John A. Bandy watches for suspicious activity during a patrol south of FOB Duke south of An Najaf April 15.

PFC Jeremy C. McCullough pulls security with his M60 machine gun during the patrol.

SGT Garth Sizemore, right, and SPC Johnnie Wilson from A Company, 2-2 Infantry inspect the AK47 assault rifles found by the unit at an industrial complex during the patrol.

SPC Johnnie Wilson from A Company 2-2 Infantry inspects an AK47 assault rifle found by the unit during the patrol.

Photos by PFC Elizabeth Erste

er rules the night



216th Engineers construct massive holding facility

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC KIMBERLY SNOW
196THMPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DUKE, Iraq — After only 36 hours notice, the 216th Engineer Battalion had a task force on the ground from their home base of FOB Speicher, at this hastily assembled forward operating base. And after only 48 hours, they'd built a detention area and made numerous other improvements to the camp.

Teambuilder South, the task force, is comprised of the four 216th Engineer Companies as well as a contingent of equipment operators from the Wisconsin National Guard's 264th Engineer Group, and engineers from the 144th Engineers, North Dakota National Guard.

The soldiers of Teambuilder South said they are enjoying the chance to work with engineers from other units and states.

"I believe that we're all working as one unit," said SPC James R. Fryer, 21, from A. Company, 216th Eng. "We're not many units, we're one unit. That's a good thing, teamwork."

The soldiers' first mission was to build a detention area. They received the mission on Sunday night and by Tuesday night it was ready for use.

"What we just finished here was the earthwork and the horizontal work for a 2000-man holding facility," said A. Co., 2nd Platoon Leader 1LT Charles Wilkins.

The detention area, consisting of roughly 5000 feet of berm and triple strand concertina wire, was con-

structed by 10 heavy equipment operators who built the earth berm and a platoon of 15 soldiers who constructed the wall of triple-strand concertina wire.

"There was a lot of work involved, and with the wire, there's a lot of physical labor," said Wilkins. "A lot of it was done by hand. It was done in 48 hours; I don't know if it's a record but they did really well."

The troops have also worked on numerous smaller projects to improve living areas, board up windows to protect the tactical operations center from the sand and wind, and set up latrines. Their next big project is to build a firing range both for small arms and for track vehicles, said Teambuilder South and A. Co. Commander CPT Thomas C. Waugh.

"These guys have been working hard the past few days," said Waugh. "The pace isn't going to let down either. It is going to stay just like this until we go."

In addition to these projects, the soldiers have also been tasked with doing force protection upgrades for the camp, said Assistant Brigade Engineer CPT Ronald Talarico. The upgrades consist primarily of placing concertina wire and constructing observation points, traffic control points, and earth berms to protect the soldiers from observation and direct and indirect fire.

Eventually, said Talarico, they will likely help build a helipad, roads within the camp, living areas, and in the long term, perhaps MWR facilities like a gym.

The engineers allow the brigade to resource from within rather than having to contract out to civilian workers, he said. He added that the engineers' work was excellent.

"The reason is because they're National Guard guys

who do this on the outside," he said. "So they are just a tremendous asset to the brigade."

SSG David Hall, a truck driver with HHC, 216th explained that soldiers in his section cross train on everything. He said that every soldier in his platoon can drive just about any piece of equipment they have. An operations officer for a facilities maintenance company, Hall explained that many of the 216th engineers have extensive experience in their civilian jobs.

"I have guys that own their own carpentry and constructions businesses," he said. "SGT (Kevin L.) Rudd here, he's a county engineer inspector. He's the best operator on any piece of equipment I've ever seen. You add all that experience combined; it makes one hell of an engineer company."

The headquarters company has been busy since arriving in Iraq. They were tasked with improving 27 FOBs throughout Iraq, including expanding perimeters and making improvements to main gates. They had just started on their first project at FOB Roughrider near the Iran border when they were tasked to come here.

Hall explained that his group was hand picked for this mission by his commander. He said they were the best at what they do and were excited for the opportunity to join this operation.

"It's what we want to do. The busier we are; the happier we are," he said. "We just want to get the job done. We're not here to be heroes; we just want to get it done and get home. That's what it's about."

Soldiers from Task Force Teambuilder South work in tandem on bulldozers to construct an earthen berm around an under-construction detention center at Forward Operating Base Duke on April 12.



Medics juggle many tasks, treat casualties

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC KIMBERLY SNOW
196TH MPAD



PFC Ivy J. Marks changes a dressing on a shrapnel wound to the arm of a soldier who was wounded when an IED exploded outside the Ba'qubah police station March 18.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE GABE, Iraq – As the 1st Infantry Division gains momentum in helping the people of Northern Iraq, medics on this base are forced to juggle multiple tasks while keeping soldiers healthy.

Besides treating the usual aches and pains during sick call hours, the medical team from the 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery Regiment is also responsible for the camp's preventive medicine issues, medical evacuations, medical support for unit missions, medical care for detainees and a host of other duties.

"Fighting the sanitation conditions is the toughest part of the job," said SSG Robert W. Brummitt, the aid station's enlisted supervisor. "Making sure everybody keeps sanitary, testing and treating standing water to help keep mosquitoes down, and making recommendations concerning water and sewage conditions to battalion."

The aid station generally treats up to five people per day for medical follow-up and dressing changes, Brummitt said. But the facility is equipped to handle four to five seriously injured patients, he said.

Brummitt, a 16-year Army veteran who spent six months in Panama when the United States invaded that country in 1989, is one of the few on the team who has seen and treated combat injuries.

"When you get down here and actually see it for real, it's a really big eye-opener for everybody," he said. "This is real, and sometimes it's one of your own guys, and it's really tough."

There are 17 men and women -- one physician's assistant and 16 health care specialists -- who make up

this base's medical team. The group includes three two-man medical evacuation teams. Two come from FOB Warhorse's 201st Support Battalion and one from the 30th Medical Brigade out of FOB Anaconda.

The six medical health specialists are attached to the 1-6 Field Artillery and are responsible for ground evacuation from FOB Gabe and the area surrounding Ba'qubah to either a landing zone for further medical evacuation or by air to FOB Warhorse's surgical team.

Four of the aid station's medics are assigned directly to each battery as medical support. The four soldiers accompany their assigned battery on raids, patrols and routine missions.

SPC Michael Miranda is assigned to Cobra Battery. He arrived on Camp Gabe March 9. His first impression of Iraq and the mission was not a positive one, he said, calling it a "lost cause." But his feelings changed after his first week here.

"Going on patrols and seeing the little kids, seeing the way families live, it kind of made me think there is a purpose - liberation," he said. He enjoys accompanying his comrades on missions and he likes to help out whenever possible.

"I want to do everything I possibly can," Miranda said. "I'll get up and pull guard and scan the area. I'm not one to sit in the vehicle, I want to do everything."

But his lowest point in Iraq came March 25 when his good friend, SPC Adam Froehlich, was killed by an Improvised Explosive Device.

"... He slept right next to me," Miranda said. "I know he's watching over us now."

Improved MWR opens at Warhorse

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC KIMBERLY SNOW
196TH MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARHORSE, Iraq - With the opening of a new, much improved Morale, Welfare and Recreation center here in April, soldiers now have a place to relieve stress and communicate with their loved ones overseas.

The grand opening was sponsored by Kellogg, Brown and Root.

"Just to relax will do a lot for (soldiers') morale," said MSG Twanda L. Pressey, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team's equal opportunity advisor and MWR liaison. "And the opportunity to not have to wait in line for the internet, and to use it in an air-conditioned facility" is a bonus.

Among the services offered are 10 additional computers with internet capabilities — bringing the total to 30 — a PlayStation area with 10 game consoles, a television viewing room, a reading room, a ping-pong and foosball room and a theater featuring a wide screen television with surround sound.

Additionally, the new gym is equipped with a treadmill, an elliptical machine, a stair-stepper, a stationary bike and a universal gym and dumbbell set. It's air conditioned and is opened 24 hours a day.

It's next to the existing gym, which it supplements. The old gym does not have air conditioning, but officials plan to enlarge and close off the old gym from the other facility and add air conditioning.

Third Brigade Commander, COL Dana J.H. Pittard was on hand for the grand-opening celebration.

"It's a great start, but it's just that, it's a start," he said. "Quality of life will improve overall in FOB Gabe, Warhorse, Normandy and throughout our AO."

There are talks to erect another MWR building that will be three times the size of the current facility, Pressey said. It will house up to 40 computers, a basketball court, gym and theater.

The MWR's supervisor, Debbie Cranford of Ponca, Okla., came here Nov. 8 with a one-year contract to run the MWR programs at Warhorse. There were no activities on the base when she first arrived, she said. The FOB had only Segovia system phones and internet in its MWR facility.

Cranford, who thought she would arrive to manage an existing facility, said she had her work cut out for her.

"But that's what's exciting about it," she said. "It's what we make it. I mean,



3rd Brigade commander COL Dana J.H. Pittard speaks during the grand opening ceremony for the Norquist MWR facility at FOB Warhorse April 1.

we're making it, and we are building it together. It's a partnership between KBR and the military."

The MWR supervisor has a crew of three coordinators — Ramus Johnson, Igor Milidrag and David Culley Jr. All three have either MWR or recreation background, and they've been a tremendous help to Cranford, she said, adding that Johnson brought the original gym equipment here from LSA Anaconda and assembled it himself.

"I like working with people, that's what brought me to this job," Cranford said. "I'd never worked with the military before, and I saw this opportunity as an honor and a privilege."

Cranford and Pressey have formed a council to get input from soldiers and discuss programs and events they intend to implement at the MWR. They've also asked for representatives from each unit stationed here.

The new MWR center was named for SPC Joseph Carl Norquist, a 4th Infantry Division soldier who was killed when his convoy came under attack last October. Pittard promised Norquist's former commander that he would not rename facilities on the FOB that were named after deceased 4th ID troops.

Special Weapons And Tactics... ...Iraqi style

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC SEAN KIMMONS
25TH ID PAO

BULL PATROL BASE, Iraq – As the United States gets ready to turn power over to the Iraqi people, 1st Infantry Division Soldiers recently spent nearly two weeks making sure a special Iraqi police unit is prepared to enforce the law after the transfer.

The Special Mission Team is similar to S.W.A.T teams police forces have in the United States.

To improve the abilities of a SMT platoon serving the Kirkuk area, Soldiers from Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment along with U.S. Army advisers gave some insights during a 12-day assessment course on cordon and search methods that ended April 5.

The advisors assessed the SMT members' tactics and gave them advice on certain Military Operations in Urban Terrain tasks.

"Their tactics are so primitive compared to what we are trained on," said CPL Christopher Miller, a team leader with Bravo Co., TF 1-21 INF. "Throughout the



Iraqi Special Mission Team members clear a room during cordon and search training April 5.

"It's really good to see all those different ethnicities of Kurds, Arabs and Turkomen working together in one city."

-- U.S. Army advisor

assessment we looked for weapon safety and corrected them. There were a lot of on-the-spot corrections ... and a lot of push-ups."

One Soldier considered the assessment as part of the Coalition's overall mission in turning Iraq over to the Iraqi people.

"This is a stepping stone in completing that mission. ..." said CPL Stephen Reagan, a combat medic

with Bravo Co., TF 1-21 INF. Throughout the assessment period, instructors and advisors touched on different areas of cordon and search tactics using buildings on base. They even participated in the SMT's training by role-playing friendly and criminal personnel who were sometimes wrestled to the ground. Three SMT officers were put in charge of the training; the soldiers and advisers were just there for guidance if they saw

weak points within the teams. During the 12 days of training, the SMT members bonded, which could help them in future operations, Miller said.

"Not only did they grow as individuals, but they were really tight as a team, especially the leadership," Miller said of the SMT, which is comprised of a variety of ethnic groups that typically don't get along.

"It's really good to see all those different ethnicities of Kurds, Arabs and Turkomen working together in one city," the Army advisor said. "Hopefully it will spread to other cities."

SGT Rebeea Abdul Hussein Rebeea, a SMT member, thought it was essential to work with the U.S. forces to eliminate stereotypes and learn from U.S. tactics. "For me, its good education and PT," Rebeea said of the training. "Every time we look on the television we see Coalition Soldiers, but we don't know who they really are. This was a good way to get to know them on a different level."



Dhiya Hasan, a SMT member, restrains a criminal portrayed by SPC Stephen Reagan, a combat medic with Bravo Co., 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment during cordon and search training for the SMT members April 5.

1-4 Cavalry continues to aid city despite snags

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY SPC ISMAIL TURAY JR.
196TH MPAD

AD DULUIYAL, Iraq – Civil Affairs Soldiers of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment have worked since February to improve this city's infrastructure.

But tribal conflicts among city council members and frequent attacks from insurgents have slowed progress, officials said.

"I would like to repair all the schools, roads and mosques, but I can't," LTC James Chevallier, Commander of the 1-4 Cavalry told city council members at a recent meeting. "If the security situation doesn't improve, I cannot focus on rebuilding."

The council members frequently squabble, and although many are capable leaders, their meetings are unorganized, said 1LT Kevin Calkins of California. He is the 1-4 Cavalry's civil affairs officer.

In that capacity, the lieutenant manages the squadron's civil affairs teams in this city and Ad Dwr. The teams are responsible for planning and coordinating civil military operations.

Calkins, who also is the project and purchasing manager, focuses his efforts in Ad Duluiyal while his second team concentrates on rebuilding in Ad Dwr.

He meets with members of the Ad Duluiyal city council several times a week to discuss issues they have, the city's needs, contractor selection for projects and updates on rebuilding projects. He also acts as a mediator to ensure that there is a balance of power and the interest of each community within the city is equally represented.

"I enjoy working with a lot of them," he said of the council members, most are sheiks. "There are some that I look forward to seeing on a regular basis and there are some who are difficult to deal with."

Still, he continues to help them.

Sheik Jamal Mater Mohamed, who is one of the few educated council members – most are farmers and several are illiterate – also said he looks forward each week to working with the 1-4 Cavalry, and he appreciates the unit's efforts.

"We hope to keep meeting for the benefit of the people," he said through an interpreter. "We hope that



A translator, left, helps an Iraqi doctor sift through a box of medicine delivered to an Ad Duluiyal clinic by CPT Brian B. Cushing, a doctor with the 1-4 Cavalry.

peace will be safeguarded. I am very optimistic about progress here."

While he's more concerned with rebuilding the city, Calkins frequently has to shift his attention to getting the council members to work together. They all are from different tribes, which is the chief reason for the friction.

Additionally, about half of the council members are from the Aljabouri tribe. The group strongly supported Saddam Hussein when he was in power, and it received favors from the former dictator.

So, the tribesmen tend to be in a good 'ole boy mindset and make proposals that benefit only their tribe.

"I'm focusing on getting these guys to work with us and work with each other to improve their community," Calkins said. "I want them to look past the tribal differences and think about the community."

During a recent city council meeting, one council

member became angry because he was not consulted before a contractor was selected to renovate the city's main clinic. He stood up and began shouting as he walked toward another councilman sitting diagonally from him. The others also started shouting and carrying on side conversations.

Sensing that the meeting was getting out of hand, Calkins interrupted.

"Gentlemen, may I have your attention, please?" he said firmly. Most did not understand English, but Calkins' frustration over their bickering was apparent. They all became silent even before the interpreter translated the lieutenant's order.

"We cannot get anything accomplished if we all raise our voices and talk at the same time," Calkins continued scolding the men, all of them sheiks.

The meetings are normally fraught with interruptions and disorder. As a result, Calkins is working on parliamentary procedures for the council to follow.

Currently, Calkins is looking to renovate the city's main clinic. However, each council member prefers that the lieutenant first repair or a build clinics in sections of the city that are dominated by each council member's tribe.

But Calkins has insisted that the main clinic will first be repaired because it will benefit the entire community.

The facility has not been repaired in several years and has no furniture, including beds. There also is no modern medical equipment, and there is a shortage of doctors.

But the 1st Infantry Division and the 1-4th Cavalry will spend \$140,000 to renovate, furnish and equip the clinic, Calkins said.

The 1-4 Cavalry medics recently delivered a box of medicine to the clinic and treated a few patients. Plans are in the works for the 1st ID's head doctor and a team of medics to spend a few days at the clinic treating patients.

When the main clinic is complete, Calkins said he will concentrate on repairing the city's water treatment plant. Several other projects, including roads, mosques and school constructions, are also in the works.



1LT Kevin Calkins, manager of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment's civil affairs team, discusses renovation plans of a clinic with an Ad Duluiyal city council member during a recent meeting.

1st ID twins serving in combat zone

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY SPC. SHERREE CASPER
196TH MPAD

CPT J.R. West, Commander of the 1st Infantry Division's Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) had re-enlisted brothers before, but never identical twins.

On the flip side, SSG Mark A. Thompson, 1st ID's career counselor, had never gotten twins to sign on the dotted line, until Sgt. Leon Franklin Jr. signed with his lefthand and his baby brother, Levon - by seven minutes - with his right.

Re-enlisting in Iraq under the Big Red One sign at the Division Main headquarters palace was too good of a chance to pass up for the brothers, they said.

"It's a once in a lifetime thing," Leon said.

Thompson joked that the pair re-upped for 12 years and will get \$20,000.

But that's fuzzy math since each will actually get half of that. He scored a coup when he got two soldiers for one since the pair rarely like to be separated. Under their recently signed contracts, both Soldiers' next duty station after Iraq will be Fort Knox, Ky.

"They've never been apart. They keep following one another," laughed MSG Clifford Proctor, Noncommissioned Officer In Charge of the division's strength management.

Proctor is no stranger to supervising the pair.

So how does he tell them apart? "I just keep them separated," Proctor said. While it's not a certainty, the Franklins may be making history as they support Operation Iraqi Freedom II. They are, perhaps, the only identical twins to face combat together while serving with the 1st Infantry Division since its lineage began in 1917.

Leon said he and his brother maybe the sole identical twins assigned to the division here as it approaches its ninth decade.

In his daily dealings, SFC Wilton A. Hobbs, G6 Operations NCO, has often crossed paths with both brothers.

"I get confused as to which one is which," he said.

Hobbs said at one time Leon wore a mustache so it was easier to identify the two. Since he shaved it off, Hobbs said whenever he sees one of the brothers he just says, "Hi Frank."

"I got them covered," he said with a grin.

Based at Forward Operating Base Danger in Tikrit, Leon oversees the awards section at Division Main. Since March 19, Levon has been at Camp Speicher about 20 minutes away. At the Division Rear, he collects information on the Big Red One's missions.

Perhaps not surprisingly, so far the pair's military careers have paralleled one another.

Born on Sept. 1, 1977, to Winnie and Leon Franklin, the twins acknowledge they've always had a close bond. So much so that when Levon joined the Army Reserve in August, 1996, Leon followed suit two months later.

Both attended Hinds Community College in Raymond, Miss., where they pursued general studies courses. The twins worked at Goodwill Industries of Mississippi and a Shoney's Restaurant.

With a baby on the way, Leon said his little brother was heading to the altar and thought enlisting in the Army would provide some security.

"He wanted the best for his new family," Leon said.

When the 19-year-olds attended basic training at Ft. Jackson, S.C., their senior drill sergeant thought he was seeing double. Of course, that reality didn't set in until he made a bunking SNAFU with the twins.

Leon said the drill sergeant originally had the pair assigned to the same room. The instructor didn't realize there were two of them until hours later, he said.

"He didn't really realize (that we were twins) or looked at the names closely," Leon remembers.

Leon recalled the drill instructor - SSG Berry - saying "Hell no," to allowing the brothers to share a room. Levon was promptly packed off to the room next door.

"They gave us a lot of attention," Leon said of the drill instructors who oversaw the eight weeks of basic training. However, the pair roomed together in an eight-man bay during Advanced Individual Training at Ft. Jackson where they trained as human resource special-



CPT J.R. West, left, gives the oath of re-enlistment to SGT Leon Franklin, nearest flag and SGT Levon Franklin May 1.

SGT Leon Franklin, left, and his brother, Levon, are pictured together prior to their re-enlistment.



ists.

No matter which twin messed up though in basic training, both paid the price.

"Anytime that one of us had to drop, the other had to drop too," Levon recalled.

Levon said he enjoyed going through basic training with his older brother who candidly admits that he probably made more of the blunders as he became indoctrinated into military life.

Levon said he enjoys serving side-by-side with his brother in the Army.

"You always have someone to talk to and they can understand where you are coming from," he said.

When asked who he thinks is a better soldier, Levon pointed out both do their best. Each holds the sharpshooter badge and received promotions to specialist together. In April, 2000 the pair re-enlisted together in Korea and were promoted together to sergeant on Feb. 1, 2001.

Although each stands 5 feet, 6 inches, Leon outweighs his brother by about five pounds. He noted that athletically they compete on the same level, except for running.

"It just depends on what kind of day we have," Leon said.

Leon describes himself as an introvert compared to Levon who is "more outgoing."

Levon said that "every once in a while we like to play tricks on people who never met us."

For example, he might be at work when his older brother comes to visit. He said his co-workers would marvel at how quickly he could change clothes.

"People my brother knows would come up to me and say, 'Hey Leon, what's up?'" Levon said. "I would tell them I was his twin brother, but they wouldn't actually believe me. I would have to convince or show them I wasn't lying," he said.

"It's weird when people say hello to you and you don't even think that you have met them before. This happens every day of my life."

Levon said he can be mischievous, too. "Sometimes I tell people I'm not Leon, but sometimes I play like I'm him and don't tell them," he said. "It's easier."

Sometimes though the twins' present company Commander, CPT J.R. West, can't tell the pair apart, Leon said.

"I don't really think he knows who is who," he said.

West shouldn't feel bad. He's in good company, depending on who you listen too.

Leon said his mother sometimes had a problem telling the boys apart while they were growing up in Bolton, Miss.

But his mother, Winnie Bracy, disagrees.

"I have never had a problem telling them apart except on the telephone," she wrote in an e-mail.

-- See Twins, Page 21

FOB Dagger helps boost economy by employing Iraqis

**STORY BY
SFC NANCY MCMILLAN
196TH MPAD**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DAGGER, Iraq – American soldiers are helping boost the local economy daily by hiring Iraqi contractors on this base located just outside of Tikrit.

There currently are about 35 locals working on the compound of 270 people, said SSG Jason R. Vickodil, who heads the Recreation and Utilities shop here. His office hires the contractors and dispatches them to units.

Employing the locals pump about \$15,000 into the economy each month as Iraqis earn about three to four times more annually since the American-led invasion.

The locals are hired for a variety of tasks, which

includes cleaning, gardening, carpentry, plumbing and air conditioning and generator maintenance, said Vickodil, a Pittsburgh native.

The R and U shop receives about four to five orders a day for palace maintenance and repair projects, and seven to eight requests for construction related jobs, Vickodil said.

“There are orders pertaining to the mission that we turn around quickly,” said SPC Steven M. Pillsbury Jr., who also works in the R and U shop. “(There also are) orders to build personal-type things that we do on a first come, first serve basis, time permitting of course.”

As busy as the shop is everyday, the locals never get tired of working on the compound, Vickodil said.

“The guys in my shop are pretty versatile,” he said. “Many of them are trained and certified, but are ca-

pable and willing to do different types of work.”

Employing the Iraqi citizens make sense, Vickodil said. It gives many of them a source of income and puts money back into the local economy.

“Everything but the wood comes from this area,” he said. “We put thousands of dollars into the city’s businesses.”

Additionally, hiring the local nationals saves on labor hours, not to mention their knowledge of what works best in this environment and how to adapt and overcome any shortcomings that may arise, he said.

Working with the Americans has been a wonderful experience, the Iraqis said. Vickodil agreed, saying the he’s learned a lot from them.

“We have an overall good working relationship,” he said.

Soldiers who re-enlisted in combat zone to get retroactive bonuses

**STORY BY SFC MARCIA TRIGGS
ARMY NEWS SERVICE**

WASHINGTON — An estimated 5,000 Soldiers who re-enlisted last year may be eligible for thousands of dollars in bonuses, the Defense Department recently announced.

Additionally, the Army is offering up to \$10,000 in incentives to Soldiers currently serving in combat zones to re-enlist for at least 36 months.

Bonuses of up to \$5,000 will be retroactively paid to soldiers between the ranks of specialist and staff sergeant, with 17 months to 10 years in service. Those troops had to have re-enlisted between March 18 and September 18, 2003 when the bonus was unavailable, officials said.

Only Soldiers who re-enlisted under the option of being assigned to a deployed unit in Afghanistan, Kuwait or Iraq are eligible, said Ron Canada, chief of Retention Management Division, Human Resources Command.

Soldiers have until June 30 to contact their career counselors and request the lump sum payment. The program will remain open through July, but career counselors will have to submit all pertinent information to the Retention Management Division for review, according to military personnel message 04-141.

If a Soldier received a bonus based on his military occupational specialty, he is ineligible for the additional lump sum of \$5,000. However, he is entitled to the bonus equaling the higher amount, according to the MILPER.

The idea for the retroactive bonus came about after a junior 101st Airborne Soldier made a poignant comment to Les Brownlee, the acting Secretary of the Army. While visiting the Central Command area of operation, Brownlee met the junior Soldier, who re-enlisted before the bonus was offered.

He told Brownlee that he would have appreciated a bonus for re-enlisting.

Brownlee later asked Congress for money to fund the program and received \$25 million to retroactively pay soldiers who are eligible under the newly expanded dates, Canada said.

The Army is an all-volunteer force doing tremendous work, and recruiting and retention are of great interest to senior leadership, Brownlee told the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee during his testimony.

“We will continue to rely on a robust Selective Re-enlistment Bonus Program to enable achievement of our retention program. Developing ways to retain soldiers directly engaged in the ongoing war on terror is critical,” Brownlee said.

The Army initially offered the flat-rate \$5,000 re-enlistment bonus for troops because it was 6,000 soldiers behind its goal of re-enlisting 51,000 for Fiscal Year 2003.

A similar program was introduced to National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan. They were offered \$2,500 for a three-year re-enlistment and \$5,000 for committing to stay six years in their component.

The Army’s re-enlistment bonus for troops serving in combat zones recently doubled. Soldiers who re-enlistment for at least 36 months can receive up to \$10,000, officials said.

But retention goes beyond numbers and bonuses, said SGM Scott R. Kuhar, the 1st Infantry Division’s command career counselor. It’s more about Soldiers and their families.

“Bonuses are a way for the Army to recognize Soldiers and their families for their continued commitment and sacrifices for our nation,” he said. “It is more important now than ever that we retain our quality Soldiers because of the experiences they have gained while fighting the global war on terrorism.”

-- SPC Bill Putnam of the Army News Service and SPC Ismail Turay Jr. of the 196th MPAD contributed to this report.

Mother’s worries doubled with sons serving in Iraq

-- Twins from Page 20

“Levon is quiet and shy and doesn’t talk much whereas Leon is talkative,” she wrote. “They both are willing to help anyone. One can always depend on the twins.”

Leon said he was the quieter of the pair growing up. “Both of us were pretty shy when we were young,” Leon said.

After two years in the Reserve, the twins wanted to pursue a fulltime career in the military, so on Dec. 29, 1998, they enlisted in the active Army. Since their first duty station together at Ft. Polk, La., the twins have had identical duty stations. Levon likes it because home is never farther than a chat with his big brother.

“There’s always a family member around,” he said.

While some may think the pair stipulated joint assignments when they penned their contracts, Leon said that’s not the case.

Slated to board a plane on Sept. 11, 2001, in Korea for leave back home before reporting to the Big

Red One in Germany, both men remember how they got the news that shook the world.

“It was kind of weird, waking up seeing a television saying that the United States had just been attacked,” Levon said. “I thought the world had just ended.”

Leon recalls the triple attack on the United States as surreal. Both brothers had seats on a Military Airlift Command flight from Korea to Seattle, Wash. They were expecting to be back in the arms of their wives and children, but the evil face of terrorism stepped in.

Leon’s wife, La Veen, called him at his hotel in Korea and relayed the news.

“At first I thought I was dreaming,” Leon recalled. After hanging up, he proceeded to catch the newscast on a television at the hotel’s reception counter. With all military and Department of Defense civilians ordered back to the base, the events of 9/11 delayed his return to the states three or four days.

“I never thought I would be (in Iraq),” Leon said. “Even when I was in Kuwait it didn’t hit me.”

Stationed in Wurzburg, Germany, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Infantry Division, since October, 2001, Leon is the NCO of Personnel Actions and Awards. Levon is the Operations NCO. They work out of the same building there.

Having two of her sons serving in a combat zone does give Bracy pause, Leon said.

“I am very proud of Leon and Levon being able to serve their country,” Bracy said. “I worry about them constantly.”

“The worry is them not being together. They have always been together,” Bracy said. “My prayer is always their safety and them being together to take care of and look out for each other.”

Leon added: “She is like every mother – worried,” Leon said. “She knows we enjoy our jobs and she is supporting us.”

Show me the money

STORY BY

106TH FINANCE BATTALION UPARS

As Task Force Danger Soldiers rebuild Northern Iraq, the 106th Finance Battalion is addressing their finance needs.

For instance, Alpha Detachment's SSG Mike Dennie and SPC Heath Hill flew on a Black-Hawk helicopter in March to Forward Operating Base Pacesetter and conducted the Battalion's first Finance Support Team pay mission.

Dennie, a NCO of the Year, served as the Military Pay Sergeant and NCOIC of the FST. Hill, on the other hand, was the Milpay clerk and cashier. The FST duties included casual pay, check cashing, enrolling soldiers in the savings deposit program and responding to pay inquires.

Since the assignment at FOB Pacesetter, the mobile FST has conducted several other missions around the task force.

At FOB Warhorse, Bravo Detachment's office is the best in the building that houses it. When the unit arrived there, the 4th Infantry Division's Alpha Detachment, 230th Finance Battalion was working out of a singlewide trailer.

That was an improvement for the 230th, given the fact that it previously operated in a GP Medium. It has seen much progress and positive changes on the FOB, and was proud.

One project that the 230th Soldiers started was to build two new buildings: The future ALOC and BCT TOC. An "Admin Alley" was planned for the TOC, which would hold the Finance, PSB and S1 Shop.

When the 106th's Bravo Detachment arrived, it claimed its area, which was a wide-open space, and immediately started construction. All of the Soldiers chipped in, and with the help of several reservists carpenters, and a lot of trial and error, Alpha Detachment's new home started to take shape.

First came the walls, then the vault and finally a

high-speed cash customer service counter.

"Our office is now the envy of the building," said CPT Claire Collins, Bravo Detachment's Commander. "I am very proud of our Soldiers and our Finance Office means even more to us because of the hard work and effort that went in to building it."

The Soldiers of Delta Detachment have an even bigger task: Serving the 25th Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

The most notable contribution of Delta Detachment thus far has been the customer service it provides to Warrior Brigade's Soldiers seven days a week. Each day, the troops have the opportunity to visit the finance office and cash personal checks, get casual pay and fix pay problems.

Soldiers have also said they are grateful for the friendly customer service. This not only met the financial needs of the Soldiers, it allowed the Warrior Brigade to focus its efforts and energy on the mission.

While in a combat environment, a unique finance detachment with a specific mission has earned respect and appreciation from the 2nd BCT soldiers.

At the same time, the Soldiers of Delta Detachment have quickly come to enjoy working with a dedicated and professional brigade that is determined to carry out its difficult mission.

Aside from assisting the 25th ID, Delta Detachment has also conducted multiple FST missions throughout Task Force Danger. This not only demonstrates the resolve to provide timely finance support to all Soldiers, but it shows the Warrior Brigade that its finance Soldiers are willing to endure the rigors of the environment and the tactical challenges in order to support the brigade.

In addition to direct finance support, the finance Soldiers participated in the efforts to rebuild Iraq. Specifically, Delta Detachment has taken on a role in the Ministry of Finance operations by assisting in the improvement of the area banks.

Automation improvement, technical training and infrastructure support are all areas in which Delta Detachment is aiming to improve the banks found within



SPC David C. Dyer

SPC Brandon L. Farmer cashes a Soldier's check from the 'cage' at FOB Danger.

the Warrior Brigade's area of operations.

Though it is early in the deployment, the Warriors of 2nd BCT and the Soldiers of Delta Detachment have already established a good working relationship. Both units are confident in the mutual support.

The outstanding support provided by the 2nd BCT and the relentless finance support provided by Delta Detachment will no doubt help ensure overall success of the mission undertaken by 2nd BCT, 25th Infantry Division.

Plan enables deployed Soldiers to earn up to 10 percent interest

STORY BY SFC MARCIA TRIGGS
ARMY NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON — A Department of Defense program allows deployed Soldiers to save up to \$10,000 of their income and earn a guaranteed 10 percent interest annually.

Troops can participate in the Savings Deposit Program if they are assigned outside the United States and receive Hostile Fire and Imminent Danger Pay.

Service members must serve 30 consecutive days in that assignment before enrolling in the program.

"I highly recommend it," said LTC Pat Riley, Commander of the 1st Infantry Division's 106th Finance Battalion. "It is the safest way to earn 10 percent that I know of. Soldiers should contribute whatever they can each month without putting a crunch on the family back home."

ISG Edward Menke of the 25th Infantry Division's 125th Finance Battalion, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, also recommends the plan.

"We have our Soldiers start the program while

in theater," he said. Soldiers from the 25th ID are currently serving in Iraq with the 1st ID.

When he informs Soldiers and their families of the Savings Deposit Program benefits, Menke said, he tells them to examine their bank statements. If they are earning less than 10 percent interest on their savings, he suggests that they inquire about the plan.

"Spouses are really receptive to the program," he said. "Their savings will earn a guaranteed 2.5 percent interest quarterly."

Nearly 10,000 Soldiers are currently participating in the program, said Roger Castillo, the Savings Deposit Program manager. That total includes more than 2,000 troops who are affiliated with the 1st ID, Riley said.

The last day to make a deposit into the fund is the date of departure from theater. However, interest will accrue up to 90 days after redeployment unless a withdrawal is requested, according to a DFAS fact sheet.

Service members can contribute more than \$10,000, but interest will not accrue on any amount over the cap, Castillo said.

If the account exceeds \$10,000, the service member may make quarterly withdrawals, until his eligibility to make deposits terminates. Then he must withdraw the remaining funds in its entirety, the fact sheet stated. Withdrawing the money before redeploying is not authorized, unless the service member needs to make an emergency withdrawal.

Emergency requests must be for the health and welfare of a Soldier or his family members, and must be substantiated by a written request from the member's commander, Castillo said.

DFAS will post the SDP balance of active-component members to their Leave and Earnings Statement.

The fund was started in August 1990 for troops who were serving in the Persian Gulf Conflict, and Soldiers fighting in Operation Iraqi Freedom were added to those eligible to participate in 2003.

For more information, service members should contact their finance battalion, Castillo said.
--SPC Ismail Turay Jr. contributed to this report

Maintenance provides the one stop shop



SGT Richard S. Graves uses a jackstand to support a 217-pound armor door complete with ballistic glass, for the humvee while he places and tightens nuts and bolts.

STORY AND PHOTO BY SGT ROLAND G. WALTERS 196TH MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SPEICHER — Imagine a place with the versatility of fixing your vehicle, your electrical equipment, or even your air conditioner. That place exists at this base camp.

The 267th Ordnance (Maintenance) Company's primary mission is to provide direct support for the 835th Corps Support Battalion and backup direct support for the 1st Infantry Division.

"Direct support consists of replacing major end item assemblies such as engines and transmissions," said 1LT David P. Benak, Maintenance Control Officer for the 267th Ordnance (Maintenance) Company. The company has the capability to do fabrications and rebuild engines and transmission, he said.

"The importance of our mission is essentially keeping the equipment up and running for the companies we directly support," Benak said.

Keeping those supply lines open and the transportation company mission capable is critical and a full time job, he said.

The unit supports the transportation mission, but does much more than just repairs automotive equipment.

The high visibility thing this unit does is the up-armor program, said Chief Warrant Officer Gregory J. Reicks, who oversees the Ground Support Equipment (GSE) section.

The Allied Trade section is a fabrication section with welders and metal fabricators that build gun trucks to people's specification by cutting out sections from an expensive, thick metal sheet and welding them together.

The Allied Trade shop has been building gun trucks since arriving in Kuwait, Benak said. That section also

has a sign shop, with the responsibility of making the signs on FOB Speicher, he said.

A Communications and Electronic Equipment (C&E) section often provides services used by others that do not fall under the support channel, Benak said, adding that the C&E section fixes all communication equipment such as radios.

Although the sections are always bustling, the GSE will be the busiest during the summer months. With four different mission occupational specialties in the shop, the range of equipment the section fixes range from small air conditioners to heavy construction equipment, Reicks said.

"This section also replaces and services fire extinguishers," he said.

The heart of the unit is the automotive section. It is consistently backlogged, said Benak. Basically working on any wheeled vehicle, several of the mechanics along with some from the ground support section also work on the humvee Add On Armor mission, he said.

"I think so far they're doing a great job," Benak said. "The Add On Armor program is coming on line. It is a money maker for us in terms of getting a lot of jobs."

The cost of outfitting a four door humvee is \$17,500, he said. A ballistic windshield alone costs \$11,000.

"An expensive program, but it's all about protecting the Soldiers and well worth it in my opinion," said Benak.

An additional part of the AOA program is to add air conditioning to the humvees. In the near future the program will include other types of vehicles like the Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles, five tons and 900 series tractors, Benak said.

"They all have been busy and willing to do whatever it takes to help someone out, even though they aren't in our direct support (channel)," Benak said.

Water conservation critical to mission

STORY BY SPC SHERREE CASPER 196TH MPAD

There's nothing more frustrating than looking forward to a hot shower after a long day and getting only a trickle from the nozzle.

Some Soldiers within Task Force Danger are simply allowing a precious commodity to literally go down the drain. Water conservation is critical not only for soldiers to have a shower and shave, but to accomplish their mission.

"Water resources are limited here," said Randy S. Westfall, manager for Kellog, Brown & Root.

From units cleaning equipment to purging fuel tankers, KBR often faces a daily challenge of assuring an adequate water supply for the palace complex.

"That puts an extra stress on us for water production," Westfall said.

In order to ensure potable water, KBR pumps water from the Tigris River, which flows into the lake system around the palace complex. Water is made potable by using various chemicals and a filtration system.

Gerald E. Gardner, chief of services for KBR at FOB Danger, said lots of variables can decrease water production "on a whim."

Occasionally, water has been limited for a short period of time around Task Force Danger in order to guarantee the military compounds' dining facility has water. Westfall said making sure there is water for the DFAC is a daily concern.

**"... Conservation is important to us.
We want to meet the needs of the troops."**

-- Randy S. Westfall, KBR manager

"The troops need to be fed," he said.

While the water production capacity fluctuates, "the demand stays relatively constant," Gardner said.

Task Force Danger Soldiers can help conserve water by exercising common sense, officials said.

"Our flow restrictors are the Soldiers," Westfall said.

Instead of using full pressure when taking a shower, he urges troops to use half the amount of force.

Three to 5 gallons of water pours out of a showerhead or faucet every 60 seconds, Gardner said. Taking a "GI shower" will help limit the flow of water from the tap and allow more Soldiers to get cleaned up.

New to the concept of an Army shower? It's a no-brainer. Simply rinse off, soap up and rinse off again making sure the water is only on during the first and later steps.

There have been some reports of people taking extended showers, which have caused a lack of hot water or no water at all. Westfall said if people are courteous, there should be enough water for everyone.

"The surplus is not large," he said. "That's why conservation is important to us. We want to meet the needs

of the troops."

PFC Sandro Galarza, a supply clerk with the 415th Civil Affairs Battalion, said he's trying to do his part in conserving water by taking quick showers.

"I try not to waste too much water," the 24-year-old Plainfield, N.J., resident said. "I don't spend too much time in the shower. There are too many people behind me."

SFC Ted E. Durand, an assistant inspector general for the 1st Infantry Division, said senior leadership should lead by example and be role models. The 39-year-old Hattiesburg, Miss., resident said when male Soldiers shave, they should not let the water run.

"There's no such thing as pre-warming a shower," Durand said of some Soldiers who turn on the shower head for a while in order to get the water hot.

He suggests that the troops spend no more than five minutes in the shower stall as they clean-up GI-style.

"Don't be afraid to correct someone, because they are screwing their buddies," he said. "You guilt them into doing the right thing. Anyone should correct someone that is being greedy with the water."

'God gives us just what we need for each day'

"Just In Time" logistics.

I think that's what they call it. You know, when what you need arrives at the moment you require it. There is no need for huge stockpiles. We position supplies and equipment where they can do the best thing right now.

Throughout the Bible, God offers us just this type of spiritual re-supply. The Psalms refer again and again to the daily re-supply of God's renewing spirit. Verses such as "This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it" are familiar to many. Of special note is the way in which God fed the children of Israel during their 40 years in the desert.

God supplied them with 'manna.' This cracker like substance, along with a daily provision of quail sustained the Israelites throughout their time of wandering.

This is a powerful example of the real power of God to give us just what we need for each day, no more, no less. You may recall that manna was only



CHAPLAIN (LTC)
MIKE LEMBKE

good for one day. If the people kept some for the next day, it spoiled. One day's worth at a time.

Enough is as good as a feast!

Think about it. Sometimes we eat too much, as if we didn't know when we would eat again. I don't like that heavy, overstuffed feeling that comes from eating too much, too fast. Nutritionists tell us that eating less and chewing more is better for us and more satisfying.

This is true both for food and the exercise of our faith. In our current environment, each day is full of challenges and opportunities, missions and duties. If you approach each day asking God to provide just what you need, it places you in a position of trust, hope and mercy. There is no way to stockpile faith; it comes new each day, as a gift.

Don't count the days, make the days count!

Each day is an opportunity, not an obstacle. I encourage you to employ a day-by-day, or 'just in time' approach to your exercise of faith. Let me know how it goes!

Force Protection Section stresses importance of ID badges

"We Don't Need No Stinkin' Badges!"

Yes, you do....and that line comes from the Humphry Bogart classic, *Treasure of the Sierra Madres*. It's a lot older than you might think. So is the requirement for all non-US Military personnel to openly display their badges while on the Forward Operating Base.

It is a Force Protection standard that allows all personnel to readily identify personnel who are in areas where they should not be.

To meet this requirement, the 1st Infantry Division is instituting a new badge and employee screening policy. The system provides a means for these personnel to be readily identified.

With it, the FOB commander has the authority to grant screened, third country nationals access to non-sensitive areas of the FOB to conduct their duties. It is a

means to readily distinguish them from other personnel wearing red badges who must be escorted.

But, for it to work, it must be enforced by all soldiers. Look for identification on all personnel not in a US Military uniform. If it is not visible, challenge the person and demand to see it.

It is the obligation of all personnel on the FOB to identify themselves. If they refuse, they should be detained until they produce it.

All IID military personnel must be in uniform while on and off duty in Iraq. Department of Defense civilians and contractors in civilian clothing are required to display their U.S. DoD badge or ID card for ready identification while on the FOB. MAJ William T. Russell, Force Protection

30th BCT helps, works with Iraqi Border Police to secure Iran Border

STORY AND PHOTO BY
MSG MIKE WELSH
30TH BCT PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ROUGHRIDER, Iraq - "I was raised better than to ignore these people" said SSG Howard Branham of A Company, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor Regiment, 30th Brigade Combat Team (BCT).

"What they need is electricity, schools, and good clean water. The majority of the Iraqi people keep asking for schools" said Branham concerning his encounters with the locals. Many of the remote locations lack any formal schools.

Branham and his team from the West Virginia Army National Guard have conducted assessments of the villages and small towns that populate their sector in the Diyala region of Iraq. These are remote areas long neglected by the previous dictatorship, and the infrastructure needs are nothing less than tremendous.

"We have been working mostly with the Iraqi Border Police (IBP)" continued Branham. A Company is tasked with patrolling the border with Iran. "We're conducting night patrols, doing some joint training and operations with the IBP," added Branham. The 150th Armor has caught smugglers coming into Iraq with every type of contraband imaginable, as well as those that are crossing the border illegally. Mission profiles for the 150th Armor include interdiction operations, as well as conducting route clearings, looking for improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on endless miles of highway and dirt roads.



Members of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) show Coalition Force Soldiers from A Company, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor Regiment, the location and firing device that insurgents used to detonate an IED along a highway in Iraq. Fortunately, the incident did not result in any injuries.

"Looks like some sort of burned out tank hull" reported SSG Edward Johnson, as he peered through the scope on his M-4 carbine. Johnson and his squad dismounted from their up-armored Hummvee and cautiously worked their way around the perimeter area of an IED that had just been detonated prior to their arrival. In the distance was a berm of earth piled up with what appeared to be an old tank hull. The men of A Company were interested in the civilians moving behind the berm, who, as it turned out, weren't connected to the IED incident.

Fortunately, this IED was detonated without any military or civilian injuries. The Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) reported the IED to the Coalition Force

and A Company was tasked to secure the site. ICDC personnel were instrumental in the entire operation and continue to contribute to the security mission in Iraq.

The Soldiers from A Company are doing all that they can to help the people of Iraq and are trying to coordinate projects in their area that will improve the quality of life for the people.

Perhaps one of the greatest things that makes the Coalition Force unique is that you have men like these from A Company that can conduct effective combat patrols and at the same time demonstrate a compassionate desire to help those in need. "I grew up around coal camps in West Virginia. In my family, if you had something, everybody had something," said Branham.

Easter celebrated around TF Danger

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SFC CHUCK JOSEPH
196TH MPAD

Soldiers dressed in full battle equipment and civilian workers attended an Easter Sunrise Service held on Forward Operating Base Danger last month.

The service was conducted on the patio of a palace that belonged to ousted Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

The event was a multi-denominational worship service with seven Army chaplains, the 1st Infantry Division Quintet and two choirs comprised of Task Force Danger soldiers and American Red Cross workers.

As darkness slowly turned to light, Division Chaplain, LTC Mike Lembke proclaimed, "He is risen!" and the congregation responded, "He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!" Similar scenes were repeated throughout the day around the task force, Lembke said. More than 50 services were held.

The Division has 50 chaplains and chaplain assistants. All were busy throughout the day.

"As Chaplains, we all work together to support each other and to bring God to the soldiers, and to bring the soldiers to God," said MAJ Jonathan C. Gibbs, deputy division Chaplain.

Division Support Command Chaplain, MAJ Edward Kelley, a Catholic Priest, served communion after the service ended here, drank a cup of coffee and left for a day of Blackhawk flights to seven more bases in three Brigade Combat Team areas. Only Catholic Priests serve communion to Catholics, and the division



Division Support Command Chaplain, MAJ Edward Kelley performs a Catholic communion ceremony during the Easter sunrise service at FOB Danger.

has two.

More than 100 attended the Danger service, which is more than the chaplain's staff expected, according to the chaplain's office.

Senior Chaplain Assistant, MSG Tommy Marrero, headed the group that organized the service.

"It takes a lot of man-hours to put on a service like this," he said. "From the operations order to coordinating with units to setting up and tearing down, but it's worth it. If you're a Christian, then you should know that this is the most important thing in our faith – the resurrection."

'Days of Remembrance' ceremony honors Holocaust victims

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY SPC ISMAIL TURAY JR.
196TH MPAD

The Holocaust tells us that individual and collective responsibility for confronting hatred and tyranny is important, but insufficient, a Department of Defense contractor told soldiers during a Holocaust observance day ceremony held at Forward Operating Base Danger in April.

"We must also examine the moral dimensions of our social and political institutions and the power of our scientific achievements," Opher S. Heymann said during the April 18 event, held in the dining facility during breakfast. The program was organized by the 1st Infantry Division's Equal Opportunity Office.

The purpose of the Days of Remembrance ceremony was to educate soldiers and reflect and pay tribute to millions of Jews who were slaughtered during the Holocaust, organizers said.

"I think it is important to remember these events because they are still happening today," MSG Taylor Njagu of the division's equal opportunity office said, referring to the millions of people former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein murdered during his 30-year regime.

"To forget those events is doing a disservice to the future," Njagu said.

In the late 1930s, the Nazis killed thousands of handicapped Germans by lethal injection and poisons, Heymann told the crowd.

After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, mobile killing units were organized and the German Army began shooting massive numbers of Jews and Roma or Gypsies in open fields and ravines on the outskirts of the conquered cities and towns.

Eventually, the Nazis created a more secluded and organized method of killing throngs of civilians. Six extermina-



MSG Taylor Njagu, left, of the division's equal opportunity office, thanks Opher Heymann after the civilian contractor gave a speech about the atrocities committed against Jews during the Holocaust.

tion centers were established in occupied Poland where large scale murder-by-gas and body disposal through cremation were conducted.

During the Holocaust, Heymann, himself a Jew, lost two thirds of his family in the gas chambers of Chelmo, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, and others were executed in the forests of Poland, he said.

"As Americans and as citizens of an interdependent world, we must exercise ongoing vigilance to make certain that post-Holocaust genocide such as Srebrenica and Rwanda never repeat themselves," Heymann said. "It is our responsibility as not only Americans but as human beings to put an end to the genocide."

The program was an excellent one, and the division should have similar events in the future, soldiers who attended the ceremony said.

"Little things like this benefit everyone," said CPT Eugene Waldenfels of the 4th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery.



Opher Heyman speaks about the tragedy of the holocaust.

25th ID mourns 2nd loss



SPC Kelly Ward shed tears during the memorial service for PFC John Amos.

STORY AND PHOTO BY SPC SEAN KIMMONS 25TH ID PAO

KIRKUK AIR BASE, Iraq – PFC John D. Amos II of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment had a reputation as a soldier who always smiled at people. He was a friend to everyone and performed his duties to the best of his abilities.

On April 4, he was killed by a suicide bomber while attempting to protect other soldiers and the people of this city.

He was 20.

“I have no doubt that there are soldiers alive in this audience today, including myself, because of the courageous actions of John Amos and his fellow soldiers in that security position,” CPT William Venable, Charlie Co. Commander, said as he held back tears during Amos’ memorial ceremony last month.

Amos, a Valparaiso, Ind., native and sev-

eral other soldiers were pulling security in Demonstration Square in this city when a civilian drove next to a Humvee Amos was standing behind.

The driver of the civilian vehicle detonated an Improvised Explosive Device, killing Amos and injuring eight other soldiers in the blast.

He is the first 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division soldier to be killed by the enemy in Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

“PFC Amos served his unit and above all his country with unquestionable honor and dignity,” said SGT Jeffrey Adkins, Amos’ team leader. “Amos may not be with us as we continue the mission, but his memory and friendship will forever remain an inspiration to us all.”

Venable credits Amos with preventing a catastrophic incident in Kirkuk.

“I have no doubt that this single soldier’s actions protected the entire City of Kirkuk in no small way by preventing violence

against the city’s citizens,” Venable said. “Had the bomber reached his intended target, the city may have been cast into violence for days afterwards.”

More than 100 2nd BCT soldiers and Airmen crammed into a tent during Amos’ memorial ceremony. People fought back tears throughout the final roll call, silent tribute, firing of volleys and the playing of Taps.

At the end of the ceremony, mourners stood in front of a makeshift memorial with his photo, boots, Kevlar helmet, identification tags and M16 rifle. Each person saluted the memorial.

“Not only was PFC Amos one of my Soldiers, he was a true friend and a faithful comrade in arms,” Adkins said. “I assure you that if Amos could talk to us today, he would insist that we continue the mission and not focus on the fact that he is gone. He would tell us to keep our heads up and overcome any obstacles that may come in our path throughout life.”

In Memory of Task Force Danger and 1st Brigade Combat Team Soldiers killed while serving in Iraq

SSG Christopher E. Cutchall D Troop, 4 th Cavalry September 29, 2003	SSG Sean G. Landrus B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion January 29, 2004	1LT Doyle M. Hufstедler B Company, 1 st Engineer Battalion March 31, 2004	SGT Christopher Ramirez B Company, 1-16 Infantry April 14, 2004
2LT Todd J. Bryant C Company, 1-34 Armor October 31, 2003	PFC Nichole M. Frye 415th Civil Affairs Battalion February 16, 2004	SPC Sean R. Mitchell B Company, 1 st Engineer Battalion March 31, 2004	SPC Richard K. Trevithick C Company, 9 th Engineer Battalion April 14, 2004
SSG Gary L. Collins A Company, 1-16 Infantry November 8, 2003	2LT Jeffrey C. Graham C Company, 1-34 Armor February 19, 2004	SPC Michael G. Karr Jr. B Company, 1 st Engineer Battalion March 31, 2004	SGT Brian M. Wood A Company, 9 th Engineer Battalion April 16, 2004
SSG Mark D. Vasquez A Company, 1-16 Infantry November 8, 2003	SPC Roger G. Ling C Company, 1-34 Armor February 19, 2004	PFC Cleston C. Raney B Company, 1 st Engineer Battalion March 31, 2004	SPC Marvin A. Camposiles HHC, 1-26 Infantry April 17, 2004
SPC Josph L. Lister B Company, 1-34 Armor November 20, 2003	SFC Richard S. Gottfried HHC, Division Support Command March 9, 2004	PVT Brandon L. Davis B Company, 1 st Engineer Battalion March 31, 2004	PFC Shawn C. Edwards B Company, 121 st Signal Battalion April 23, 2004
SPC Thomas J. Sweet II Service Battery, 1-5 Field Artillery November 27, 2003	SSG Joe L. Dunigan Jr. B Company, 1-16 Infantry March 11, 2004	PFC John D. Amos II C Company, 1-21 Infantry April 4, 2004	SPC Martin W. Kondor A Company, 1-63 Armor April 29, 2004
SPC Uday Singh C Company, 1-34 Armor December 1, 2003	SPC Christopher K. Hill B Company, 1-16 Infantry March 11, 2004	SGT Lee D. Todacheene HHC, 1-77 Armor April 6, 2004	SGT Joshua S. Ladd 367 th Maintenance Company April 30, 2004
SGT Ryan C. Young A Company, 1-16 Infantry December 2, 2003	CPT John F. Kurth B Company, 1-18 Infantry March 13, 2004	SFC Marvin L. Miller C Troop, 1-4 Cavalry April 7, 2004	SPC Trevor A. Win'e 24 th Quartermaster Company May 1, 2004
SGT Jarrod W. Black B Company, 1-34 Armor December 12, 2004	SPC Jason C. Ford B Company, 1-18 Infantry March 13, 2004	SPC Isaac M. Nieves A Company, 82 nd Engineer Battalion April 8, 2004	CPT John E. Tipton HHC, 1-16 Infantry May 2, 2004
SGT Dennis A. Corral C Company, 1 st Engineer Battalion January 1, 2004	SPC Jocelyn L. Carrasquillo HHC, 1-120 Infantry March 13, 2004	SSG Raymond E. Jones C Company, 1-7 Field Artillery April 9, 2004	SSG Todd E. Nunes A Company, 1-21 Infantry May 2, 2004
SFC Gregory B. Hicks B Troop, 1-9 Cavalry January 8, 2004	SPC Tracy L. Laramore B Company, 1-18 Infantry March 17, 2004	SSG Toby W. Mallet C Company, 1-7 Field Artillery April 9, 2004	CPT Christopher J. Kenny F Troop, 1-4 Cavalry May 3, 2004
SPC William R. Sturges Jr. B Troop, 1-9 Cavalry January 24, 2004	SPC Clint R. Matthews B Company, 1-18 Infantry March 19, 2004	SPC Allen J. Vandayburg C Company, 2-2 Infantry April 9, 2004	SSG Marvin R. Sprayberry III F Troop, 1-4 Cavalry May 3, 2004
SPC Jason K. Chappel B Troop, 1-9 Cavalry January 24, 2004	PV2 Ernest H. Sutphin B Battery, 2-11 Field Artillery March 19, 2004	SPC Peter G. Enos HHB, 1-7 Field Artillery April 9, 2004	SGT Gregory L. Wahl F Troop, 1-4 Cavalry May 3, 2004
SGT Randy S. Rosenberg B Troop, 1-9 Cavalry January 24, 2004	PFC Jason C. Ludlam HHC, 2-2 Infantry March 19, 2004	SGT William C. Eckhart F Troop, 1-4 Cavalry April 10, 2004	PFC Lyndon A. Marcus F Troop, 1-4 Cavalry May 3, 2004
CPT Matthew J. August B Company, 1-9 Engineer Battalion January 27, 2004	PFC Dustin L. Kreider B Company, 1-26 Infantry March 21, 2004	PV2 Nathan P. Brown C Company, 2-108 Infantry April 11, 2004	SPC James J. Holmes C Company, 141 st Engineer Battalion May 8, 2004
SFC James T. Hoffman B Company, 1-9 Engineer Battalion January 27, 2004	SPC Adam D. Froehlich C Battery, 1-6 Field Artillery March 25, 2004	SSG Victor A. Rosaleslomeli A Company, 2-2 Infantry April 13, 2004	SPC Phillip D. Brown B Company, 141 st Engineer Battalion May 8, 2004
SGT Travis A. Moothart B Company, 1-9 Engineer Battalion January 27, 2004			

