

Danger

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Forward

Volume 1, Issue 6

September 2004



***New
Iraqi
Army
Taking
Shape***



MOVING IN

SPC Ramon Rodriguez, an infantryman from 2nd Platoon, Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, leads a search team into the courtyard of a house in Al-Ma'ejeel July 31. Rodriguez is followed by team members, infantrymen, SPC Ronnie Richards, SPC Stephen Cavalieri and SGT Robert Landry.

On the cover

New graduates of the Iraqi National Guard Academy on Forward Operating Base Danger celebrate after their graduation ceremony August 18.

(See more on Pages 13-15)

Photo by SGT Roland G. Walters

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SFC Chuck Joseph

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MESSAGE FROM DANGER SIX

The mission continues to very high standards. CSM Cory McCarty and I remain impressed with the discipline and commitment of the entire division combat team. We are collectively making a huge difference in AO Danger and have achieved irreversible momentum. Your doctrinal application of full spectrum operations to defeat the insurgency and set Iraq up for self-sufficiency is making military history. Continue the mission with doctrinal troop leading procedures, to include platoon rehearsals before each combat patrol. No one does it better.

We are setting the conditions for a deliberate and doctrinal relief in place with the 42nd Infantry Division in early 2005. Orders have been issued and I expect every echelon of the division combat team to take this on as a matter of priority. This relief in place will be seamless to the good people of Iraq and the insurgency. We will set Operation Iraqi Freedom III up for unqualified success.

For those 1st Infantry Division soldiers approaching the potential for orders when the stop loss and stop move is lifted, seriously



MG JOHN R. S. BATISTE

consider a voluntary Foreign Service Tour Extension to stay with the division. We will redeploy, reintegrate, and retrain to balance mission and family. Stay with the division you know and trust. Achieve predictability. Do not worry about the reports of the Army in Europe redeploying to the States. While this may happen to one degree or another, I predict that the re-stationing is years away and will not impact any of us on this or the next tour. There is no better place to serve than with the 1st Infantry Division in Northern Bavaria.

We all are very thankful for the support of our families. I have never seen better family support programs and offer a special thank you to the Family Readiness Group senior advisors and leaders, and all the soldiers of Task Force Victory. We are indeed a team of dedicated soldiers and families. There are none better. Thank you all for your continued support and commitment.

God bless you all.

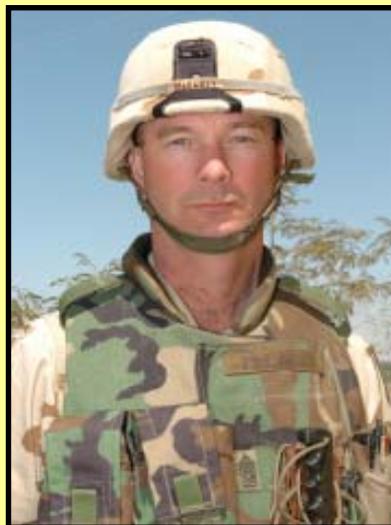
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MESSAGE FROM DANGER SEVEN

Another month has flown by and the end of our tour is approaching quickly. You are starting to hear familiar words again such as: Transfer of Authority, Relief in Place, Reintegration and block leave. Although planning and preparation for the RIP and TOA are going on, do not let it consume you. We have to continue to focus and maintain our situational awareness in our daily mission. Iraq is and continues to be an extremely dangerous place.

I encourage you to toughen up on your self-discipline, motivation, and commitment to the mission. You cannot let complacency creep into your ranks. If you are a leader you must maintain the same motivation that you showed up here with eight months ago. The slightest amount of deviation from being a disciplined Soldier or unit could be devastating to your self and the organization. The commander has put in his intent that "we will continue to run until we get to the finish line". There is no doubt that that includes all the great things this Task Force does on a daily basis.

Soon there will be Soldiers coming in to replace us. We will



CSM CORY MCCARTY

execute a deliberate relief in place with them. This process is going to be one of the most important missions we have undertaken since our arrival in Iraq. We will train our replacements all the way down to the Private level. The techniques you teach them will be what they will use to deal with the every day complexities of their daily mission in Iraq. Your training will enable them to stay alive in this very precarious environment. We cannot take this lightly; we are duty-bound to show them what right looks like!

Lastly, I am very proud of everybody in Task Force Danger. We are a disciplined unit with the highest standards in Iraq. We can accomplish any mission assigned to us. We must continue the mission with the same enthusiasm as day one. Just remember when you

think it is getting too hard and start feeling sorry for your self, look down at your right shoulder; look at the combat patch you are wearing. That patch represents the thousands of Soldiers before your service for freedom and the United States of America.

-- Danger 7





PFC Elizabeth Erste

PFC Travis Creech of A Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, smiles as his squad leader, SSG Kevin Kirby, pins him during their Combat Infantry Badge ceremony at Foward Operating Base Normandy August 25.



PFC Elizabeth Erste

Two Black Hawk helicopters land at Forward Operating Base Normandy August 25 before a Combat Infantry Badge ceremony for Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment 3rd Brigade Combat Team August 25.



SFC Chuck Joseph

PVT Janhoi Reid (left) and SPC Brian Huskie, infantrymen from C Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, provide security while their unit searches a home in a village near Samarra July 27.

SGT Jim Kendall, civil affairs team sergeant, 415th Civil Affairs Battalion provides security while members of 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment conduct a battle damage assessment near Thar Thar July 19.

SFC Chuck Joseph



SPC James B. Smith Jr.

A Bradley Fighting Vehicle goes through a traffic control point run by the 82nd Engineer Battalion near Baqubah July 19.



SPC James B. Smith Jr.
SPC Henry Godin, from Bravo Company, 82nd Engineer Battalion, works a traffic control point near Baqubah July 19.



PFC Elizabeth Erste
Near Baqubah August 30, SPC Andrew D. Patterson of B Company, 82nd Engineer Battalion, drills a hole for a signpost that will warn motorists not to park along the highway.



PFC Elizabeth Erste
PVT William Knight, left, and PFC Gregory Guyton, both of the 82nd Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, keep watch for suspicious activity August 23 as their fellow Soldiers and members of the Iraqi National Guard sweep for Improvised Explosive Devices near Baqubah.

Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Reconnaissance Troop, 1st Infantry Division, run towards an abandoned house that they are going to clear and use for an observation point outside of Baqubah on August 19.

PFC Elizabeth Erste





PFC Elizabeth Erste

On the afternoon of August 30, SGT Todd Meisinger of B Company, 82nd Engineer Battalion, scoops dirt out of a signpost hole along a highway near Baqubah.

On August 29, SPC Benjamin Cardenas, foreground, of C Battery, 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery, and his fellow Soldiers watch for suspicious activity during a weapons cache sweep in Baqubah.

PFC Elizabeth Erste



SFC Chuck Joseph

SPC Julian Murillo (left) and PFC Paul Handibode, both infantrymen from C Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, entertain some Iraqi children during a break from a cordon and knock search mission in a small village south of Samarra July 27. The New York City residents are members of the New York National Guard.



SFC Chuck Joseph

Criminal suspects are escorted into the Tikrit criminal court by an Iraqi police officer August 17 while members of the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment prepare to enter the chief judge's chambers to present computers and pistols to the court.

On August 19, Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Reconnaissance Troop, cover each other as they head to the roof of an abandoned house so they can use it for an observation point, outside of Baqubah.

PFC Elizabeth Erste



Quick reactions

clear roads, save lives

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC SHERREE CASPER
196TH MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE GABE, BAQUBAH, Iraq - "Hopefully nothing goes boom."

Less than 24 hours after arriving at this forward operating base near Baqubah, 2LT Eric Nelson found himself uttering those ominous words after finding a suspected Improvised Explosive Device. Nelson commands 3rd Platoon, Charlie Company, 82nd Engineer Battalion, 1st Infantry Division.

On this day the platoon comprised the 3rd Brigade Combat Team's Quick Reactionary Force. Quick being the optimal word.

While on a lunch break from patrolling Blue Babe Highway, the QRF received word that an IED had been spotted alongside Canal Road east of FOB Warhorse. Soldiers barely had time to grab their lunch and go.

Within moments, a small convoy of humvees was racing to the reported location.

"It's hard to catch them," said SGT Joshua S. Staderman, a combat engineer tapped as a gunner for the mission.

The Oklahoma City resident was referring to the enemy insurgents who planted the IEDs designed to

A member of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team is charged with destroying the suspected IED.



Soldiers from the Quick Reaction Force huddle up near a possible IED embedded along the roadside.

maim and kill Soldiers as well as innocent Iraqis. From the beginning of July until mid-August, Staderman has been in five IED explosions, escaping injury each time.

"Being on QRF is like being a firefighter, you're on call," said Nelson, who graduated this summer from the Engineer Officer Basic Course at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. "We are supposed to be the first ones to respond to a scene."

The QRF may encounter everything from IEDs to rocket propelled grenade attacks to small arms firefights and ambushes.

SFC Mark Patterson said the mission of the QRF is to secure Blue Babe Highway. To its credit, the 3rd BCT's QRF has been very successful in that task. Patterson said there has been a 30 percent decrease in IEDs along the stretch of roadway in the last three months.

Patterson said having up-armored humvees has lessened Soldiers' casualties. Only the week before, the vehicle Patterson was riding in was struck by an IED.

"It was a huge blast," he said. "We got hit, but kept moving."

Except for some pain in his ears, Patterson and his crew were unscathed by the attack. The up-armored humvee proved its mettle.

"Up-armored vehicles are great. If you don't have one you are wrong. If Soldiers don't have one the unit is wrong. The Army needs to get more up-armored humvees."

He said sometimes while on patrol, the QRF finds itself positioned in a certain location for an extended period of time.

"You might have someone take a shot at you and you'll pursue that person for maybe an hour," Patterson said. "It's pretty hard to find them. It's pretty much like chasing a rabbit most of the time."

Nelson, who calls Jackson, Miss., home, said his first hours on the job were an eye-opener.

"I know what to look for from now on," he said.

Of course, he appeared to be among some seasoned QRF veterans.

"We are glorified infantrymen that know how to play with demo," Staderman said.

After arriving on the scene, the QRF was advised by local Iraqis where the suspected IED was buried.

"If they don't blow up on us we usually blow them up," said SPC Justin A. Hayse, a combat engineer from Plainfield, Ind.

SSG Ivan D. Cruz uncovered red and green wires coming from a small black box buried beneath a small mound of dirt along Canal Road.

"It's time to play in the dirt," Hayse said.

At first the QRF tried to destroy the suspected IED themselves.

"A 50 cal. ought to move some stuff," Nelson said. "Light her up," Staderman said.

When the rounds failed to get the job done, the QRF requested it be allowed to blow up the suspected IED with C-4.

Instead they were put in a holding pattern until the Explosive Ordnance Detachment team arrived. The EOD experts were instead tasked with the mission of getting rid of the suspected IED.

In the end, the EOD found that it had blown up remnants of a former IED that had exploded, but had not been disposed of.

But the QRF Soldiers found it's better to be safe than sorry.



The suspected Improvised Explosive Device turned out to be the remnants of a former IED.

Blue Spaders

knock on doors, search homes to secure Iraqi villages

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
CPT L. PAULA SYDENSTRICKER
196TH MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE BRASSFIELD MORA, SAMARRA, Iraq - As the sun slowly rises in the distance, each Soldier, wearing an intense look, scanned his sector of fire like a hawk.

One team disappeared around the corner of a wall into the house and brought the residents into the courtyard. The other team took up security around the wall. Next, the commander and an interpreter strolled through the gate to talk with the occupants.

This is an average day in the life of an infantryman Soldier.

A cordon and search is common knowledge for an infantryman, but for others in the military it is a foreign topic. A cordon means an element of company size surrounds the outside of an area. They make it impossible to go in or out of the area. Once the area is secured, the other elements search each house within that area.

"We search everything in the area and look for designated targets," said CPT George Rodriguez of Salisbury, Vt., commander of Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment. The National Guard unit is based in Gloversville, NY.

Charlie Company, along with elements of 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment; 415th Civil Affairs Battalion; 324th Psychological Operations Company; Special Forces and Iraqi National Guard conducted two cordon and searches during the last week of July.

Each element present had a specific mission while in the village of Al Maejeel, located south of Samarra.

The ING, which is attached to the 2-108th, had the cordon of the outer perimeter while a platoon from the 1-26th provided security on the cordon along with their M2A2 ODS Bradley fighting vehicles. Charlie Company had the responsibility of searching the houses while maintaining security.

Civil Affairs talked to the local village leaders and assessed the area. PSYOPS' mission was to observe the local populace and distribute radios for the local radio station that's in the works. Special Forces also provided security.

Rodriguez said that the ING soldiers were in the training phase of the cordon and search, and eventually they want the ING to take over the actual searches. For now, the ING conducts the outer cordon where it searches all vehicles coming and going through the

cordon.

Along with the ING, a platoon of Apache Company, 1-26th also executed the outer cordon. They along with their Bradleys were strategically placed along the high traffic areas.

While they were responsible for the outer security, Charlie Company provided the security and the search team. They also talked to the local leaders along with the Civil Affairs.

"At first they (local populace) were standoffish and didn't really want to become involved with the coalition forces," said Rodriguez, adding that the locals didn't want to be perceived by neighbors as helping the coalition.

"After going there continuously and showing the folks that we're there to help, they have become a lot friendlier." Additionally, returning to these villages every so often has opened up a form of communication with the locals, he said.

The civil affairs Soldiers assess each village they go into to determine what they can do to help the locals

Coalition forces distribute candy and toys, and contribute to the local economy by purchasing such items as sodas. The purchases are a way of showing the people that the troops are there to help them, said MAJ Victor Jones of the 415th Civil Affairs Battalion, an Army Reserve unit from Kalamazoo, Mi.

The Detroit native said his unit gave the kids toys and candy to prevent them from playing with explosives and to keep them busy.

The 324th PSYOPS Company is an Army reserve unit out of Denver, Co. Its mission is to relay messages to the local populace.

"We handed out radios today to let the people of this village listen to the program that we broadcast from Brassfield Mora," said SPC John Winfield of Denver.

He also mentioned that the radio would play Arabic music along with coalition forces messages integrated within them.

Each of these elements will continue for a month of searching the village a couple times or more a week. Before July, the units were conducting cordon searches more often.

While each unit has other missions to accomplish, all agree on one thing: It's good for each unit to meet the people in the villages and make its presence known.

Rodriguez also said that the ING have come a long way, and its soldiers want to do the right thing.

"I think the ING feel they have a big brother to look out for them and that's basically what we are doing," Rodriguez said.



SGT Kristopher Kinnear, a team leader from Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, searches the roof top of a house in a small village south of Samarra.

PVT Janhoi Reid from Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, pulls security outside a small village's clinic south of Samarra while his unit searches inside.



Counter fire

Task Force 1-26 shoots back at the enemy

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SFC CHUCK JOSEPH
196TH MPAD**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE BRASSFIELD-MORA, SAMARRA, Iraq – Anti Iraqi Forces launch inconsistent random attacks on this and surrounding bases with mortars and rockets. Task Force 1-26 doesn't take the attacks standing still. They shoot back.

When enemy fire is launched, a chain reaction occurs, sending Soldiers into action. There will be many decisions made in the next two minutes that could unleash havoc on the enemy.

"COUNTER FIRE, COUNTER FIRE, COUNTER FIRE," echoes through the airways from a solitary soldier in a truck-mounted armored box. Wires and cables run to a radar unit outside. Digital data flows from the radar's computer into the Tactical Operations Center.

The "counter fire" call is heard in many places. It is

immediately followed by grid coordinates and information about the incoming round. The velocity, diameter and trajectory of the rounds are detected and transmitted. The radar scans the sky 24 hours a day, said PFC Jordan Presnell, a radar operator from Delta Battery, 1st Battalion, 33rd Field Artillery.

Seconds after the alert, soldiers at the Fire Support Element desk in the TOC mark the grid on their computer. They scroll through screens of different scale maps.

Simultaneously, the coordinates are plotted onto satellite photos that, with a click of the mouse, can be viewed by the FSE. They know what kind of weapon and from where it was fired. They know, through pictures from the sky, what the ground around the launch point looks like.

The radar system also predicts the possible impact point for the weapon, SSG Keith Laird, the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment assistant fire support non-

commissioned officer said. However, Keith added that the system was not useful as an early warning device.

Across the TOC, the operations and intelligence sections confer. Where are our friendly elements? What collateral damage could occur? Check the airspace. Are there any flights overhead? The decision to fire back has to be made by someone on the command staff with the rank of major or above, Keith said.

At the other end of the base, the radio call squawks across the gunner's radio. They man their mortars and Paladin guns around the clock, too. The second they hear "counter fire," they drop everything and run to their positions.

Listening on a tower in the middle of the post are forward observers. They hear the call and immediately turn in the direction of the launch. Visual confirmation of incoming rounds, if available, is radioed into the TOC.

The Fire Direction Control team is in the loop, too. They command the guns. When the coordinates come in, they immediately formulate the return fire. The math is done, the guns are locked on, and the rounds are ready to be sent down range, said 1LT Paul Robertson, platoon leader of 2nd Platoon, Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 113th Field Artillery. Radio traffic bounces back and forth from the FDC to the guns. Computers on the Paladins are checking with the computer in the FDC. They wait for the word.

When the target is cleared, the command to fire is given. The artillerymen can let loose a variety of weapons. The guns can shoot illumination rounds, high explosive rounds, rocket assisted rounds and even laser-guided rounds, SSG Kenneth Farley, a Paladin crew chief from Alpha Battery, 1-113 said. The munitions can be delivered with accuracy, too.

"With good MET (meteorological data) we can drop a round in a 55-gallon drum," Farley said.

The 155mm gun of the Paladin shakes the entire operating base when fired. The self-propelled howitzers are the biggest artillery pieces in the Army's inventory, Robertson said. He added that his platoon's Paladins can shoot 30 kilometers with rocket-assisted rounds.

Soldiers here frequently scramble to bunkers for protection when the guns go off. Shouts of "incoming" or "outgoing" are heard. The mood shifts to one of calm when confirmation of outgoing rounds is received. Smiles confirm the mood. Their facial expressions and nervous laughter prove that they are glad to have the big guns and, yes, the technology on their side.

Above and below: Ready to fire, day and night, Paladin 155mm guns sit manned by Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 113th Field Artillery, on Forward Operating Base Brassfield-Mora near Samarra. Radar technicians, fire support specialists, forward observers and staff at the tactical operations center are ready, 24 hours a day, to fire at Anti-Iraqi Forces who shoot mortars and rockets at Coalition Forces.



Operation Cajun Mousetrap III: Task Force 1-26 Fights Anti-Iraqi Forces in Samarra

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SFC CHUCK JOSEPH 196TH MPAD

PATROL BASE RAZOR, SAMARRA, Iraq – Task Force Danger Soldiers, in an operation dubbed “Cajun Mousetrap III,” conducted an overnight raid into the heart of Samarra that started late August 13 and ended early August 14.

The mission objectives were to assess the capabilities of the Anti-Iraqi Forces in the city and clear roads, said CPT William Rockefeller, commander of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

He stressed that the operation was a “limited attack mission.” His soldiers were to clear roads blocked by AIF and fire at enemy positions if fired upon.

PFC Ryan Howell, a Bradley Fighting Vehicle gunner from Bravo Company and a Toledo, Ohio native, was literally pumped up for the mission. He emerged into the hallway of a building on Patrol Base Razor

SPC Luis Santiago, an infantryman from Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, checks his combat gear one more time before he and his unit enter combat in Samarra August 13.



sweating from a just-finished workout in the unit’s weight room.

“I like to lift before a mission,” Howell explained. “It’s been too long since we’ve been in the city,” Howell added. “I’m ready to go.”

“We’re always ready to go,” said 1LT Warren Wessling, platoon leader of Bravo Company’s 2nd Platoon.

SGT Nicholas J. Roha, a gunner on an M1A1 Abrams tank from 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment, attached to Bravo Company, spent his down time before the mission relaxing.

“I feel pretty good,” Roha said. “All of us have already been through a lot of combat, so we know how we react,” he added.

He, along with his counterparts, double checked weapons, night vision equipment and other battle gear and filed out of the building, into the darkness and onto their vehicles. The unit was going into Samarra, a place they hadn’t been in a while.

Patrol Base Razor sits on the Tigris directly across from Samarra. On the roof of the command post, radio traffic reported and signaled events of the battle.

Rockefeller’s company maneuvered across a bridge from the west side of the Tigris, using heavy machine gun fire and several vehicle-launched, wire-guided missiles to clear roadways of obstacles, sources said.

Once in the city, the company received fire from enemy positions and met the fire with overwhelming force. Tracers converged on each other. Gun fights were in progress. Fire from one location would cease, and radio traffic would indicate that an Alpha or Bravo Company unit was past the objective and was moving to the next.

Tracer rounds and explosions lit the city and re-

flected on the Tigris during the early stages of the operation. Approximately one hour into the struggle, the city lights went dark and the only light came from sporadic fire fights on the city streets.

The peak of the resistance came from an old Baath Party headquarters building, said an unidentified voice monitoring the radio.

The radio announced to the observers to take cover behind the rooftop bunkers. A white flash and orange fireball preceded the loudest explosion of the night. The thump of the report jarred the building situated more than 1,500 meters away. A 500-pound bomb from an Air Force jet just finished off that enemy position, a voice from the dark roof reported.

Apache gun ships from the 1st Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team aided the counter attacks with 30mm cannon fire, Rockefeller explained in an interview after his company exited the city with no casualties.

Alpha Company completed the sweep from the north and exited the city by the route cleared by Bravo Company, said 1LT Scott Gilman, executive officer from Alpha Company.

Alpha met an equal amount of resistance and success. They fought their way through as Bravo Company pulled out. Remarkably, like their sister company, the unit took no casualties, CPT Michael Jurick, liaison officer from 1-26th said.

Of significance, Jurick said, Alpha Company took out two rocket propelled grenade teams. At least one was destroyed by an Abrams tank attached to the unit from the 1-77 Armor.

“We met our objectives and everybody came back,” Rockefeller said. “That’s excellent.”

Tracer rounds and their report light up Samarra as members of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team engage Anti-Iraqi Forces August 13.



Mortuary specialists perform somber task

Care for fallen comrades

**STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC SHERREE CASPER
196TH MPAD**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARHORSE, BAQUBAH, Iraq – While many troops thrive in their Military Occupational Specialty, one 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division Soldier prefers not to have to use his skills.

That's because when SGT Christopher Morales gets a radio call, he knows he has the somber task of caring for a fallen comrade. The Queens, N.Y., resident is the sole mortuary affairs specialist assigned to the 3rd BCT at this forward operating base.

"I take care of fallen Soldiers and make sure they get the proper respect," Morales said.

Although a member of the 54th Quartermaster Company, based at Ft. Lee, Va., the 24-year-old was pegged for assignment with the 1st ID's 201st Forward Support Battalion.

And deploying to the desert during combat operations is nothing new for Morales, who was tapped for duty when Operation Iraqi Freedom kicked off in 2003.

So how does he handle one of the more stressful jobs in the military?

Professionalism is key, he said.

"I just try and do my job and get them back home as soon as possible," Morales said. "We try to get every U.S. Soldier out of country within 72 hours."

Destination: Either Landstuhl Army Medical Center in Germany or Dover Air Force Base in Delaware. Soldiers are then met by loved ones who escort them for private burial.

Based at FOB Warhorse, Morales is in charge of receiving all Soldiers' remains who served within the 3rd BCT's sector, which includes FOBs Warhorse, Scunior, Normandy and Gabe.

"Unfortunately, we have been having a lot of incidents in this area," Morales said. "July was very slow, thank God."

When the 3rd BCT initially arrived in Baqubah, it was averaging three to four deaths a month, he said.

At a temporary collection point at FOB Warhorse, Morales is responsible for everything from processing personal effects to making sure a body is viewable for positive identification.

In the case of Iraqi civilians, he is charged with typing up a death certificate that will be signed by a medical doctor and the processing of personal items found with the deceased.

Morales is meticulous when inventorying personal effects. He said if paperwork is not done properly, it opens the military to potential lawsuits. While he has been trained to assist in autopsies and perform embalming, those duties are done by mortuary affairs specialists assigned to Logistical Support Area Anaconda near Balad.

An Army mortuary affairs specialist for six years, Morales once considered re-classifying after a couple of years on the job. He admitted the stress of his job often weighed on him.

But an encounter with a grieving mother firmed his resolve to stay in the MOS.

Morales was tasked with escorting a body to Dover Air Force Base. Morales recalled how thankful the mother was for the special care he gave her son. He said she cried on his shoulder and told him that he'd never know how much his efforts meant to her.

With those words, Morales' military path was confirmed.

Not that times haven't been difficult for him.

While he tries not to connect himself with those he is processing, he has had to care for some Soldiers he knew personally. When those tough times surfaced, Morales would turn to his wife, Carmencita, a fuel handler with the 201st FSB.

"She calms me down if I am upset about something," he said. "She is just always there."

Morales said he has gone through some stressful moments, but realizes that "everyone out here is going through a little stress."

For now, however, Morales must rely on long-distance chats with his wife, who is a specialist with the 201st FSB.

Carmencita is expecting the couple's first child in March and was redeployed back to Vilseck, Germany.

Her words of advice?

"She just told me to keep praying and come back safe to them," he said.

"The only thing that's on my mind right now is going home to see my baby born," Morales said. "That's my goal right now, to make it home."

But the Jamaican-born Soldier - who is seeking American citizenship - knows that may not be in cards. He said he might not be able to attend the birth because he may still be deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

He concedes it's a fact of military life.

Deployments are nothing new for Morales, who estimated he's been deployed four out of his six years in the Army.

When the time comes, however, Morales said he would like to offer his skills in the private sector.

"I am still hanging in there so I think I could do it in the civilian world," he said. "Personally, I think I have been through the worst."

On Sept. 11, 2001, he was one of the many military mortuary affairs specialists who traveled to the Pentagon after it was attacked. It was something he said no one could be prepared for.

Describing it like something out of a movie, he said the news cameras that reported the tragedy didn't even scratch the surface of its magnitude.

"It was nothing compared to what was on the news," he said. "All of the cameras were hundreds of meters away."

Morales said that he saw things that the television cameras couldn't show.

"When I was there it didn't quite hit me until a couple of days later," he said.

While Morales provides a vital service, he said he wished he didn't have to.

Whether in time of war or peace.



SGT Christopher Morales, a mortuary affairs specialist with Alpha Company, 201st Forward Support Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, prepares for work. The Queens, N.Y., resident cares for fallen Soldiers, processes personal effects and ensures death certificates are prepared as part of his duties.

Training Iraq's Army of the future

Iraqi National Guard taking shape

STORY BY
SGT KIMBERLY SNOW
196TH MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE NORMANDY, MUQDADIYAH, Iraq — They approached slowly, stealthily, low to the ground with heads turned to the side and faces pressed into the sand. Sweat-soaked and covered in dirt, they dragged their AK-47 rifles along with them. Although determined, the grimaces on their faces betrayed their exhaustion.

"Hey, Mohammed! Tell them to make sure they stay in their lanes," yelled CPT Brian M. Ducote to his interpreter as he scrutinized training of the newest platoon of the 205th Iraqi National Guard.

Ducote, the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment's liaison to the 205th ING, frequently visits the training facility at FOB Normandy to monitor the progress of the training program he spearheaded in early May and to gather input from his instructors on how to improve.

Much of the training, including classroom instruction, is reminiscent of the U.S. Army's Basic Combat Training course.

The initial 15-day course incorporates a wide range of training events from basic first aid to conducting coordinated attacks. For the duration of this training, they live eat and sleep there, doing "nothing else but training," Ducote said.

Like the basic training most U.S. Soldiers remember, instructors are all business. One ING soldier this day learned the penalty for returning late from a break when instructor SFC Luis Aguilar "dropped" him for push-ups.

"Too many of you are letting this (points to muzzle)

drag in the dirt. You're also not watching where this is pointing," said Aguilar, returning to his block of instruction. "It should become automatic to you."

Aguilar, who maintains the bearing of a drill instructor, firmly lectures his trainees on the importance of muzzle awareness and other issues he observes in training. However, he counters his strict approach with positive reinforcement.

"If we see you pointing it at someone in the future, you know what is going to happen (more push-ups)" he continued. "Other than that, I can see that you've been working very hard."

His words are met by the trainees with a few smiles and weary nods. The soldiers have just finished IMT (individual movement techniques) and are beginning classroom instruction on hand-and-arm signals to prepare them for the next day's training in conducting squad-level attacks.

In order to formulate an effective training program, Ducote sought the advice of SGM Darrin Bohn and other non-commissioned officers with experience in training soldiers. Bohn, he said, not only chose which tasks to incorporate, but also how to conduct the training and in what order.

"Sergeant Major Bohn has been the sole source expert for everything," Ducote said. "He has been instrumental in making sure that this is a success."

Ducote also praised the professionalism of his instructors, Aguilar and SSG Raymond L. Wray, both infantrymen and SSG Heath A. McLaughlin, a tanker, whom he said were chosen for their demonstrated excellence.

"Sergeant Major (Steven) Falkenberg, the Command Sergeant Major for TF 2-2, has only given us the

absolute best NCOs," he said. "Staff Sergeant McLaughlin is a tanker, but you wouldn't be able to tell the difference. The way he knows the material, the way he instructs, the way he contributes to the mission."

The team's hard work, as well as that of the trainees, has shown through the performance of the ING soldiers they have trained.

After ING soldiers have completed the 15-day course, they begin joint missions with coalition forces, participating in all aspects from planning to rehearsals to execution. And so far, Ducote said, they performed exceptionally well.

Following a recent joint patrol in Dali Abas, one of his interpreters told Ducote that several residents of Dali Abas asked him if the ING soldiers were actually Americans dressed in Iraqi National Guard uniforms.

"The way they're carrying their weapons, the way they're functioning as a platoon, is not like most Iraqi soldiers have in the past," he said. "So it was a huge compliment to us. It really meant a lot to the officers and NCOs who've committed to training these men."

Their biggest challenge, Ducote said, has been to make the ING understand the importance of a professional and effective non-commissioned officer corps. He said they particularly stress the need to empower squad leaders.

"Squad leaders before weren't expected to know anything, they were just expected to do," he said. "We expect squad leaders to be able to operate independently and follow orders."

One of the best opportunities to develop junior leaders has been through the physical training program. Squad leaders must form their squads every morning for the PT formation. After about three days, they start leading their own PT.

Instructors encourage squad leaders to push their Soldiers during the sessions.

"You can't give up during physical training, because if you give up on physical training or combat training, you could give out in combat, you could give up in battle," Ducote said. "It's important to be able to lead soldiers not only in physical training, but also in the real deal. And they make the correlation."

The program's "train the trainer" atmosphere is also helping to develop leadership skills, Ducote said. Concurrent with combat skills training, course graduates teach new Soldiers basic skills such as saluting, customs and courtesies, calling people to attention, and marching.

In addition to the training they receive at FOB Normandy, some Soldiers are selected for the Primary Leadership Development Course run by U.S. Soldiers at FOB Danger in Tikrit.

Ducote said that the ING soldiers have responded very well to the training.

"I think it's the first time that they've ever had anyone who has taken the time to train them to the same high standards as we train our own soldiers," he said. "We're not hiding anything from them; we teach and expect from them exactly what we expect of the American Soldier."



1LT Kamil Sztalkoper

An Iraqi National Guardsman searches Ali Yoseph during a squad level training exercise with the 205th Iraqi National Guard Battalion on FOB Normandy July 27.



Iraqi National Guardsmen move out during a squad-level training exercise with the 205th Iraqi National Guard Battalion on Forward Operating Base Normandy July 27.

New generation of Iraqi Soldiers

**STORY BY
SPC ISMAIL TURAY JR.
196TH MPAD**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE O'RYAN, Iraq -- When several men in the nearby village of Ad Dujayl failed in their attempt to assassinate Saddam Hussein in 1982, the Iraqi dictator, whose regime was toppled last year, went on a murderous rampage.

He executed the perpetrators and several of the men's relatives. He also slaughtered 600 people, including women and children. Hussein then cut off the village's electrical supply and burned the people's farms.

Now, 22 years after the massacre, the villagers' hatred for Hussein is as ripe as ever, and many of the victims' male relatives have enlisted in the local Iraqi National Guard battalion. The ING troops are being trained by Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment on this forward operating base, which is located just outside of Ad Dujayl.

"When I see Saddam I will eat his heart," said Abbas Mahde Saleh, 24, whose father was killed in the 1982 massacre.

Joining the ING, Saleh and others said, will afford them the opportunity to provide security for their beloved country, right the wrongs Hussein committed and exterminate anti-coalition forces, which are preventing Iraq from returning to sovereignty.

"The people who don't like coalition forces and the ING don't like this country," said ING member CPT Hussain Majed Mohamed. "The first thing we have to do is talk to the insurgents. If they listen, good. If not, we will use deadly force. We will kill all of them."

The 2-108, a New York-based Army National Guard unit was training its second class of ING recruits in early August. The selection process was tedious, said SFC Michael Wright, non-commissioned officer in charge. Some 500 applications were submitted. However, 300 applicants were called for interviews based on their letters of recommendations, education and the like.

Each applicant was asked a series of questions, including why he wanted to be a member of the ING, could he read and write and will he treat everyone fairly. Of the 300,

An Iraqi National Guardsman "lays down suppressive fire" during a squad-level training exercise with the 205th Iraqi National Guard Battalion on Forward Operating Base Normandy July 27. The 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment conducts the training to teach the ING leadership skills and tactics that can be used in combat.

1LT Kamil Sztalkoper

An Iraqi National Guardsman lays in the prone position during a squad-level training exercise with the 205th ING Battalion on Forward Operating Base Normandy July 27. The 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment conducts the training to teach the ING leadership skills and tactics that can be used in combat.

1LT Kamil Sztalkoper



On August 19, 1LT Christophe [name partially obscured] right, both of 3rd Brigade Recon [name partially obscured] Mahdi, an ING member, after t [name partially obscured] a checkpoint near Foward Op [name partially obscured]





1LT Kamil Sztalkoper

squad level training exercise with the 205th Infantry on July 27.



SPC Ismail Turay Jr.

COL Shaker Faris Gadab Mahde Alazawi, commander of the 203rd Iraqi National Guard Battalion, addresses his troops during a visit to their training area on Forward Operating Base O’Ryan on August 4. During his speech, the colonel told the soldiers to be patient, work hard and endure the tough training so they can fight insurgents, "because Iraq has a lot of imported terrorists who encourage weak Iraqis to help them."

Officers personifies “Duty First”

158 were chosen. However, 131 showed up for the first day of training, Wright said.

Within the first five days of the course, the class trimmed down to 85 recruits. Some didn’t want to train, they were physically unfit and, perhaps, others had second thoughts after being threatened by insurgents, Wright said.

The ING training is a 21-day course that has three phases and is modeled after the American Army’s basic training course. In the first phase, trainees are taught basic military and infantry skills. All of phase two is spent on the rifle range where the soldiers learn basic rifle marksmanship.

In the final phase, Wright said, the recruits learn team, squad and platoon tactics.

Despite the language barrier – instructors worked with translators – Wright said the trainees were receptive to the training. Besides, instructors are willing to devote as much time as possible to ensure that the Iraqis are properly trained.

“It can be frustrating at times getting through, but it takes patience on both sides,” he said.

Wright and his staff also rely heavily on their Iraqi cadre. They were selected from the previous class to be platoon leaders, squad leaders and the like, he said.

Cadre member SGT Ali Ahmed Yaas, 31, was also a sergeant in the now-defunct Iraqi Army. He said life as an ING soldier is far better than it was in Hussein’s army. Previously, Yaas was paid \$2 per month. As an ING soldier, he’s making \$180 monthly.

“Now I can support my family and go to school,” he said, adding that he plans to attend a trade school to become a painter.

Abbas Ali Jwad, 21, also aspires to attend college after serving a couple of years in the ING. He hopes to become an engineer to help rebuild Iraq’s infrastructure.

Although insurgents have targeted Iraqis who are sympathetic to the coalition, Jwad and other ING soldiers said they are not concerned for their lives. They are willing to die to ensure that freedom and security returns to Iraq.

“I don’t care what they say or do to me,” said Jwad, whose uncle was among those killed during Hussein’s blood bath 22 years ago. “If I do the right thing and I do my duty to my country, I don’t care what happens. Duty first.”

Eighty-three soldiers from the Iraqi National Guard's 203rd Battalion proudly enter the parade ground at Forward Operating Base O’Ryan for their August 21 basic training graduation ceremony. The course was held at FOB O’Ryan and was conducted by the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment from the New York National Guard.

SFC Chuck Joseph



for Neyman, center, and SSG Arturo Gutierrez, Intelligence Team, advise SGT Ali Mahjub and three Iraqis assaulted two ING members at Forward Operating Base Warhorse.

PFC Elizabeth Erste



BRO Cafe serves up hot java, relaxation

**STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT W. WAYNE MARLOW
1ST ID PAO**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq - At the BRO Café here, patrons are treated to first-rate movies on DVD, brightly-painted tables, a variety of coffee flavors and pay whatever they want.

Not surprisingly, the café has become a popular hangout both for Soldiers who make their home here, and for those who are just passing through. The café sprang from the mind of SSG Michael Romeo before he transferred to FOB Caldwell.

When he left, SSG Scott Daniel and CPT Patrick



The coffee has flowed regularly since the BRO Cafe opened on FOB Speicher. A variety of flavors and relaxed ambiance guarantees a steady stream of patrons.

O'Connell took the reins.

"It helps out the morale of the Soldiers," Daniel said as the sound of a Robin Williams standup routine emanated from the television.

Daniel, a Newbern, N.C., native with the 30th Heavy Separate Brigade, sits down at one of the multi-colored tables in the climate-controlled café and talks about what the coffee house has meant to the Soldiers.

Giant coffee bags from Papua, New Guinea, Costa Rica and Colombia share wall space with a landscape mural. A steady stream of Soldiers traipses through, although the most popular time of day will come later.

"We open from 1500 to 1600 for iced coffee," Daniel said. "The people like that. That's the highlight of the day because it's so hot outside. A lot of them hadn't had iced coffee, and they thought it's something they wouldn't like. Then they find out that it's sweet and cold."

Soldiers of all ranks frequent the café, although Daniel said one seems particularly ubiquitous. "We get a lot of majors," he said. "I can't tell you why, but we see a lot of them. But it's open to anyone, from privates on up. General Mundt comes here quite a bit."

BG Stephen Mundt serves as the 1st Infantry Division's assistant division commander for support.

A few feet away, a dry erase board lists the day's trivia questions. Each day three questions from a variety of subjects test the patrons. There's no competition or prize, but it adds to the ambiance.

"This board keeps them talking," Daniel said. "It's just coffee talk."

The television has also proved popular.

"Sometimes we show a series. We had Friends a

while back," Daniel said. "(Soldiers) really liked that. Sometimes they forget they had to go to work."

Some of the beverage comes from Romeo's parents, who own a coffee shop in Baltimore, while church groups and families provide still more.

Ten flavors are offered, including Irish Cream, French Vanilla and Toasted Nut Fudge. The café chalkboard lets patrons know that an espresso machine and frozen drinks are coming soon.

Ornate cups, saucers and sugar bowls are placed neatly on the counter, though most Soldiers are served in the more mundane paper variety.

The café's pay-as-you-please policy might seem to make little business sense, but it hasn't been a problem, Daniel said.

"They're pretty good about it," he said. "We get some good donations from time to time. If it wasn't for the donations, we wouldn't have gotten this far."

Some of the funds go to building improvements, and a new floor and bar stools are expected soon.

"We've got a lot of stuff on order," Daniel said. "We're also getting a surround sound system. I'm trying to get a consensus of the people to see what I can add to the shop."

Sometimes sweets such as cookies and pastries are served to complement the coffee. And before the desert sun makes too much of an appearance, patrons sometimes retreat to a shaded patio area outside.

The café has proven so popular that Soldiers from other FOBs want to get in on the action.

"We get a lot of people from other FOBs who are in transition," Daniel said. "They want to see it, and want to do the same thing on their FOB."

All in a month's work Named Soldier of the month, Soldier paints murals

**STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT W. WAYNE MARLOW
1ST ID PAO**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq -- PFC Youngok LeMaster earned her unit's Soldier-of-the-month award for May and it wasn't even her most impressive accomplishment that month.

LeMaster, an automated logistic specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Co., Division Support Command, also found time to finish work on a mural featuring the 1st Infantry Division's Victory Lady and the United States and Iraqi flags.

During her time on FOB Speicher, LeMaster also painted a landscape mural for the base's coffeehouse, and she's halfway through with her most ambitious project: adding artwork to Speicher's helipad.

LeMaster began painting in her native Seoul, South Korea in high school. She enjoyed it, but had to abandon the hobby when it proved costly. But she started up again after getting married.

"I was a housewife with nothing to do. That's how I started again," she said. "I'm still

learning."

Her duties afford little in the way of off-time, but when she does find some, it's often with a brush in hand.

"I do physical training every morning. I love doing PT," she said "Then I go to work. It's hard to get time to paint. It took me a month and a half to do the Victory Lady.

"I would try to get in two hours if I could on the days I painted," she added. "I don't like painting everyday."

Her prior paintings had been landscapes or portraits on paper, so the mural proved challenging.

"I had never done one that big before," she said. "I had to use a ladder. That was a little bit scary."

But it was all worth it in the end.

"People tell me I should get paid for it, but I don't need that," LeMaster said. "People have their picture taken in front of the Victory Lady and everybody knows who did it. That's very satisfying."

Her coffeehouse mural was inspired in part by the different places she's lived: Mountains from South Korea; a sun beating down from Iraq; and a beach from California.

The helipad will eventually feature four distinctive LeMaster works. She's already completed work on a welcoming message and the 1st ID patch. Up next will be Big Red One mottoes and the 42nd ID logo.

The time LeMaster spends on a work varies widely, depending on its complexity.

"I have to do it in my personal time, so it can take a month and a half, like it did with the Victory Lady. The coffeehouse was a much simpler project and I did it in a day, about three or four hours," she said.

The helipad will be one of the longer projects, but LeMaster said she doesn't mind.

"I love it here and I love to paint," she said. "I like being busy."



299th dental professionals make tent calls

visit FOB Brassfield-Mora from LSA Anaconda

**STORY AND PHOTO BY
CPT L. PAULA SYDENSTRICKER
196TH MPAD**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE BRASSFIELD-MORA, SAMARRA, Iraq - It's fairly simple to visit a dentist's office when you have a toothache during peacetime.

But when you are located on a remote base camp in a vast desert during wartime, the dentist, while avoiding improvised explosive devices and insurgents' bullets, makes house, er, tent calls.

CPT Nathan Carlson and SPC Alisha Allen are members of the Logistical Support Area Anaconda-based 299th Forward Support Battalion. He's a dentist and she's a dental assistant.

The team recently visited Brassfield-Mora to treat Soldiers who needed dental work.

"Most camps are (near Anaconda), but for this one you have to get on a special convoy ...," said Carlson of Hanover, Pa., adding that the majority of the base camps are within proximity of the three major base FOBs - Speicher, Danger and Anaconda. Each one has

a full-time dentist, he said.

Often times when Soldiers on Brassfield-Mora have problems with their teeth, they seldom seek help because of difficulties getting to a dentist.

"Most Soldiers think they can wait out the toothache," he said.

But that's not always the case. So Carlson and Allen of Cleveland make weeklong trips to Brassfield-Mora every two to three months. It's the only base camp that gets the special visits, officials said.

"This camp is unique because this is the first time that we have gone out to the troops," he said.

Allen said she was glad she could help the troops by relieving their pain.

Some of the work Allen and Carlson perform include X-rays, replace fillings, basic tooth repair and pulling.

Doing dentistry in the field is a little harder than working in the rear because of environmental issues, Carlson said.

"Dentistry in the field is more of a challenge than it would be normally," he said. "To be able to come here and help a Soldier who has a real problem makes it all worth it."



CPT Nathan Carlson, left, with Charlie Company, 299th Forward Support Battalion, repairs a soldier's tooth as SPC Alisha Allen helps with the patient.

Soldiers get their kicks from Karate at FOB Speicher

**STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT W. WAYNE MARLOW
1ST ID PAO**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq - MSG Harold Naugle and his son took up karate three years ago and were making progress until the older Naugle was sidelined by a knee injury.

And when the Army activated the reservist for Operation Iraqi Freedom II, it seemed as if his progress would be further delayed. However, Naugle made a discovery here: a six-time Romanian karate champion.

Naugle, a senior maintenance supervisor with the 835th Corps Support Battalion and Trenton, Mo., native, has been training under PFC Marius Maximus Ciubucciu.

Ciubucciu (Chu-BOOK-Chu), from Galati, Romania, gives classes in the gym on FOB Speicher to Naugle and about 20 other students.

It's a number that has declined substantially since the instruction started, he said, adding that 100 people initially signed up for the class. Some of the remaining 20 have earned their yellow belts.

"This beats any Army PT I've had, easily," said SGT Adam Dumont, a Ciubucciu student and construction equipment repair specialist with the 323rd Maintenance Co., and Charlestown, N.H. resident. "When you come here, you've got to want it."

Making the first step on the karate ladder proved to be excruciating for Dumont, he said.

"On a rough day when he makes us work hard, it's more agonizing than anything I've ever experienced," he said.

But it's worth it, he added.

"I came here to learn, so I'll do whatever it takes," Dumont said. "I'll push myself a little more. It was great just to get the yellow belt. It seemed like it took forever.

"You had to work for everything and all the moves," he said. "All the moves are spoken in Japanese. You've got to know what they mean and execute. If you've had a bad day, you have to shake it off and focus."

As a brown belt, Naugle is one step away from the standard of excellence — the black belt — but he said the same focus and discipline is needed at all levels.

"You've got to know the same as the other levels, but are expected to do it a little better," he said.

Naugle stressed that karate is at least as much mental as physical.

"When I first started, I thought it was for self-defense and it's really not," he said. "It can be used for that, but... it really builds the person up. It builds confidence."

Dumont agreed.

"Some of this stuff is a challenge to me that I didn't think I could do before, like flips and rolls."

At the center of it all is Ciubucciu, a movement control specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 1st Infantry Division, and attached to Division Support Command.

The former Romanian soldier and police forensic scientist has been around karate for about 17 years, more than half his life. "I don't remember exactly when I started," he said. "It was a long time ago."

Ciubucciu started as a boxer, but karate's esoteric nature drew him away. Karate focuses on controlling oneself, not others, he said.

"The most important thing is the mental control," he said. "You must control your body and your mind."

Ciubucciu has an off-the-charts PT score and anyone attending his class had better come to work. But the students will be able to tell if karate is for them, Ciubucciu said.

"It's a feeling. You'll feel it, whether you can take it or not. If you're strong enough, you'll stay," he said.

The military and martial arts are alike, in that a Soldier is a modern Samurai, he said. Both karate and the

Army require the same discipline, Ciubucciu said.

"I enjoyed working with my students and it's easy to work with them because they are disciplined," he said. "My goal is to make one of them a black belt before I leave. I'm convinced someone will get it."

The karate-Army comparison wouldn't turn many heads, but Ciubucciu also compares the sport to something less obvious: Strauss waltzes.

"I like to dance and karate gives me a similar feeling to a Strauss waltz. I feel the music in my mind," he said.

Ciubucciu is a third-degree black belt, a distinction he shares with his wife. When he turns 35, he will be able to test for the fourth degree, the highest belt in karate.

While a black belt serves as a mark of excellence, Ciubucciu doesn't think it should be seen as the end.

"Some get their black belt and decide they know everything. Wrong. It's like graduating high school," he said. "There's still a ways to go and much to learn."



PFC Marius Maximus Ciubucciu, Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 1st Infantry Division, leads his karate class in fingertip pushups during a session at the Forward Operating Base Speicher gym on July 31. Ciubucciu, a movement control specialist from Galati, Romania, won the national karate championship six times in his home country.

2nd BCT helps towns' water woes

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SFC CHUCK JOSEPH
196TH MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DAGGER, TIKRIT, Iraq - Task Force Danger units here helped two local towns regain water August 7 after valves failed and water flooded a pump house.

The towns of Ouja and Wynot were without water for three days, but quick action by Iraqi water officials and Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team restored the water supply and put in place a back-up plan in the event the valves fail again.

Pumps force the water up from the water plant located on the Tigris River, and the check valves keep the water from flowing back down hill, said Capt. Jeyanthan Jeyasingam, commander of Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team. When the valves failed, the water flooded the pump house.

Tikrit Water Department officials removed the valves and sent them to Baghdad for repairs Thursday, but they weren't sure how long the repairs would take, Jeyasingam said. His unit wasn't going to leave the two towns without water for an indefinite period of time, he added.

The HHC Maintenance Section and members of Bravo Company, 299th Forward Support Battalion mounted a combat patrol for the pump house, inspected the system and devised a plan to bypass the valves.

The only steel heavy enough to withstand the water pressure was excess steel plate from early efforts to armor the unit's vehicles, said SGT Walter Earl Crump, a wheeled vehicle mechanic from Bravo Company, 299th.

Crump, a Harrisburg, Ark., native, and other unit members began constructing caps for the leaking valves Saturday and had mounted a second combat patrol to the pump house late Saturday night. Upon arrival, Tikrit Water Department officials were installing the repaired valves that had already come back from Baghdad.

When the power was turned on to the pumps, the entire area went dark, Crump said. His first instinct was to prepare for an ambush. After realizing the pumps had knocked out the power, his team trouble-shot the generators and fixed the problem.

The team left the fashioned pieces behind for the water officials to use if the valves failed again, and the two towns now have a steady supply of water.



SGT Walter Earl Crump, a wheeled vehicle mechanic from Bravo Company, 299th Forward Support Battalion, cuts holes in a one-quarter inch steel plate on Forward Operating Base Dagger August 7.

Salah Ad Din officials tour FOB Danger, prepare to move in



Salah Ad Din Provisional Governor Hamed Hamood Shekti, right, looks over some reading material available to soldiers in the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center on FOB Danger during a tour of the facilities.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SFC CHUCK JOSEPH
196TH MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, TIKRIT, Iraq - Task Force Danger officials hosted a group of Salah Ad Din Province government officials for a tour of this compound of nearly 20 palaces August 10.

The compound currently serves as the task force's headquarters and will be turned over to the provincial government in the near future, said LTC Kirk Fernitz, Civil Affairs Team Bravo commander.

The Iraqi officials are planning future uses of the buildings and property, and some made their first trip to the compound that once belonged to former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

Hamed Hamood Shekti, Tikrit Province provisional governor, said the buildings will be used for a variety of projects. Some will house many of the province's government offices. He said he hopes to see a museum in the main palace that currently houses the task force headquarters. Shekti also said he thinks the riverfront and lakeside palaces could be developed into tourist destinations.

Shekti held a news conference the following day and announced that he thinks at least some of the buildings will be turned over by January 1, 2005. Meetings with task force leadership and future visits for more detailed inspections are in the planning process.



LTC Kirk Fernitz, Civil Affairs Team B commander, instructs Kasim Majeed Mahmood, Salah Ad Din governor's assistant for administration, on proper technique for an elliptical trainer during a tour of FOB Danger.

1-4 CAV patrols keep helping in many ways

Various units pull together to employ, protect locals

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

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MCKENZIE, Iraq — “All stations this net, all stations this net, three minutes until blast,” warned a member of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team.

From within the group of vehicles, a humvee with a loud speaker broadcasted a warning to local Iraqi civilians. Waiting patiently in a staggered column for the Improvised Explosive Device on the road to be detonated was a convoy ready to do its part in Operation Quarterhorse Rides.

“The commander’s intent here was to move into an area that hadn’t had a lot of presence in quite some time,” said MAJ Michael C. McCurry, chief of staff for the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment.

Since May, levels of Anti-Iraqi Forces’ activities against coalition forces have increased throughout the country, Army officials said.

McCurry said most of the attacks against Task Force Sabre have happened in the last three months, causing civil affairs projects in the area to cease. In order to re-establish communication with the local populace, TF Sabre conducted increased area security operations in the City of Ad Duluiyah.

The Soldiers in the Headquarters and Headquarters Troop convoy were a mix of people from 415th Civil Affairs Battalion, 324th Tactical Psychological Operations Company, the Tactical Human-intelligence Team and even American civilians working as Iraqi Police Liaison Officers.

Each had a different focus, but pooled together to provide security on the mission.

“The first night Alpha troop went in, we were successful in detaining five of the named attackers,” McCurry said.

The following three days HHT’s convoy traveled to the towns of Dawoodia and Bichegan.

It was in the town of Dawoodia that the CA team initiated an immediate labor project by hiring 44 Iraqi men for the day to pick up trash in the streets.

The project was designed to employ men on a temporary basis and help boost the local economy, said 1LT Kevin Calkins, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry’s S-5 officer. “It also allows them to earn money to take care of their families.”

Civil Military Operations assessments, which evaluate the infrastructure, politics and even demographics are one of the major responsibilities of civil affairs.

The CA team surveys these small communities for any future civil affairs projects that will improve the local economy or the local infrastructure.

“Basically, we want to improve the quality of life for the people in that area,” McCurry said. While the civil affairs team continued their mission and met with community leaders about the water treatment center and rebuilding the school, the PsyOp team passed out pamphlets and talked with the locals.

“We’re just meeting the people, trying to build a rapport with them,” said SGT Mark Williams, a team sergeant with the 324th Psychological Operations Company. “You know, the American troops coming around, just showing themselves.”



1LT Kevin Calkins, center, facing camera, a civil affairs officer for the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, with the aid of an interpreter discusses getting an Iraqi Police escort to the water treatment plant with COL Abedulla Dhyab Sallom, left, Dawoodia police chief, as Reginald R. Abernathy, right, an Iraqi Police Liaison Officer, listens in on the conversation. Calkins is a Sacramento, Calif., native.



1LT Kevin Calkins, a native of Sacramento, Calif. and the S-5 officer for the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, pays 44 Iraqi men after they picked up trash from the streets of Dawoodia. Calkins and his civil affairs team initiated an immediate labor project to boost the local economy by temporarily hiring local men.



PFC Daniel L. Gosinski, a medic with Headquarters & Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, checks an Iraqi boy’s lymph nodes for swelling in the town of Dawoodia. During these missions, Gosinski often examines the locals and hands out toothbrushes and toothpaste.

IRAQI MEDIA NETWORK

Task Force funded radio station opens in Tikrit

**STORY AND PHOTO BY
SFC CHUCK JOSEPH
196TH MPAD**

TIKRIT, Iraq – Task Force Danger and Salah Ad Din Province officials celebrated the grand opening of Salah Ad Din Radio August 19, 2004.

COL Randal Dragon, commander of the task force’s 2nd Brigade Combat Team, joined Province Provisional Governor Hamed Hamood Shekti in cutting the ribbon to the newly-outfitted radio station. Other dignitaries from the task force and local government were on hand for the celebration.

The station was funded by the 2nd BCT commander’s fund for rebuilding Iraq, and task force experts assisted on the project. SSG Klaus Baesu, Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge of the Combat Camera detachment here led the design and construction of the station. Baesu was on hand for the opening and said the station will help the people of the province,

the local government, as well as the task force.

“This radio station will serve as a bridge between Coalition Forces and Salah Ad Din Province,” Baesu said before the ceremony.

Shekti addressed the crowd and thanked the task force for help with the radio station. He stressed that a free press is vital to the future of Iraq. Shekti pledged his support to develop a free press and said, through an interpreter, that the radio station is just a start.

A television station is under construction in another building on the same site, and Baesu said it will be finished soon. The building is near completion, and equipment is ordered.

After the ribbon cutting ceremony, Shekti and Dragon were the first guests on the air. Shekti echoed his remarks from the ceremony and added that all Iraqis should refuse violence.

Salah Ad Din Province was welcomed to listen to its radio station and the host broke to the song “My Beautiful Baghdad” by Hatham Youssif.



COL Randal Dragon, left, commander of Task Force Danger's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, and Hamed Hamood Shekti, Salah Ad Din Province provisional governor, talk August 19 before the grand opening of Salah Ad Din Province Radio, a new radio station in Tikrit.

Province judges automate with help from Danger

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SFC CHUCK JOSEPH
196TH MPAD**

TIKRIT, Iraq - Task Force Danger officials delivered computers, printers and pistols to judges in the Salah Ad Din Province August 17 in an effort to bolster the judicial system in North Central Iraq.

In addition to the computer equipment, the offi-

cial brought other items that the judges desperately needed.

The judges have great stature in Iraq, said Najim Abed Al Wahid Jalal, chief judge for the province. Unfortunately, the judges are often the target of those forces who wish to destabilize the nation.

“Anywhere in the world, there are good and bad people,” Jalal said through an interpreter. “Pistols are very important for security, not just in Iraq.”

Jalal was also delighted at the thought of modernizing his court system. He said the courts will run much more efficiently, and the province will be better able to keep track of criminals and criminal proceedings with the computers.

LTC Stuart Risch, staff judge advocate for Task Force Danger, along with LTC Jeffrey Sinclair, commander of the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, the unit responsible for the Tikrit area, delivered 13 computers, three printers and four pistols and discussed other security measures that will better protect the courts and their staff.

Since the 1st Infantry Division-led task force arrived in Iraq, its Soldiers have distributed 120 computers to government entities, MAJ James R. McKee, command judge advocate for the task force’s 2nd Brigade Combat Team, said.

Risch was surprised by the level of justice already in place when he arrived, he said. Justice was handed out. However, it needed to be updated. Risch said judges used carbon paper to duplicate legal paperwork. Many of the carbon sheets had been used multiple times.

“The computers will significantly increase their efficiency, which will ultimately bring about a fair and equitable judiciary,” Risch said. “It will help bring rule of law to Tikrit, Salah Ad Din and Northern Iraq.”



MAJ James R. McKee (left), 2nd Brigade Combat Team's command judge advocate, Najim Abed Al Wahid Jalal (center), chief judge for Salah Ad Din Province, and LTC Stuart Risch, 1st Infantry Division and Task Force Danger staff judge advocate, pose with a computer monitor that was presented to the province's judges August 17 in Tikrit.



LTC Jeffrey Sinclair (left), commander, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, presents a pistol to Najim Abed Al Wahid Jalal, chief judge of Salah Ad Din Province, August 17 in Tikrit.

McKee also stressed the importance of the pistols. Judges have been assassinated, threatened and targeted by Anti-Iraqi Forces, he said. This will give the judges another layer of protection. Most have government security protecting them already, he added.

Jalal was thankful for the assistance. He said the court has contacted a member of the community for computer instruction and they will immediately start logging data into the machines.

“It’s a great pleasure to cooperate with the Coalition Forces to provide security in Iraq,” he said through an interpreter. “I would like to thank the American people, who are working to help the troops here in Iraq. We have suffered too much under the old regime for 35 years.”

Reservist, employer team to save lives

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC SHERREE CASPER
196TH MPAD

BAQUBAH, Iraq - Soldiers from Alpha Company, 415th Civil Affairs Battalion, donated a portable defibrillator, about 30 medical textbooks and dozens of small stuffed animals during a visit Aug. 19 to two hospitals in this city.

MAJ Mike Hert, the provisional government liaison officer for the Civil Military Operations Center in Baqubah, spearheaded the donation efforts. A member of the Kalamazoo, Mich., reserve unit, Hert works as a business development manager for Aurora Health Care.

The Oshkosh, Wisc., resident said his employer has been very supportive of his deployment in Opera-

tion Iraqi Freedom II and wanted to help the people of the war-torn country in some way.

"They made a point of asking, 'Hey Mike, what do you need?'" Hert said.

After he shared his observations of Iraq's health care system with physicians and staff at the Oshkosh, Wisc., based-company, they decided to pool together and donate the textbooks, stuffed animals and portable defibrillator which is valued at about \$20,000.

SFC Kevin A. Rowe, a Soldier with the 415th and firefighter with the Chicago Fire Department demonstrated to doctors at Baqubah General how to operate the lifesaving machine. He said its purpose is three-fold. The defibrillator can be used as a heart monitor, pacemaker or to restore a heartbeat.

Rowe said it restores through electric shock a normal heart rhythm when a heart is not beating properly. He said the one donated by the physicians and staff of Aurora Health Care is designed for a mobile setting like an ambulance, but can also be used in a hospital.

"The country of Iraq won't change overnight," Rowe said, adding that humanitarian efforts help to fill voids.

Rowe said daily contact between Iraqis and Americans help strengthen their trust in one another. He said the contact has "changed both sides for the better."

"Anytime you can get people relating on a human basis is always a good thing," Hert said. "I think that's what we achieved today."

He said that he was just fortunate to be "the messenger" in the donations. More medical supplies from his employer and commu-



A simple gift such as a stuffed animal brings happiness to those in a hospital in Baqubah.



SFC Kevin A. Rowe, Non Commissioned Officer In Charge of the CMOIC in Baqubah, demonstrates how to use a defibrillator to a doctor at Baqubah General Hospital.

nity are expected in the future.

Hert said a lot of medical research from a decade ago has not reached Iraq. Iraqi doctors are in "dire need" of medical information, he said.

"They sent the latest and greatest medical journals as well," Hert said of the small mound of donated textbooks which he called "priceless."

"To be able to come into a health care clinic with the most current research is invaluable because the physicians love the information and it helps them in their practice. Ultimately it helps the Iraqis."

Hert said the donations by co-workers back home will go a long way here.

"People have to remember what may be obsolete or second generation back in the States is cutting-edge here," he said. "Something left in a basement or storage room back in the States will be used here. We do have the ability to make a difference."

Weapons Removed

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC SHERREE CASPER
196TH MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARHORSE, BAQUBAH, Iraq - Soldiers with Bravo Company, 201st Forward Support Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, were recently tasked with an unusual mission.

They were responsible for transporting 52 rocket propelled grenade launchers from here to 3/5 Platoon, Alpha Company, 299th Forward Support Battalion, 1st ID on Logistical Support Area Anaconda in Balad, Iraq.

SGT Daniel S. Obrzut, the track commander for the hardened five-ton truck that was used to transport the RPG launchers, said this was the first time his unit was tasked for such a special delivery.

The fire control systems repairer from San Diego, Calif., said normally the mission is to retrieve weapons from LSA Anaconda to bring back to FOB Warhorse. He said the RPG launchers were found by a line unit during a raid and confiscated.

No matter what Soldiers haul, however, the mission is the same, Obrzut said.

The "package" has to go safely from Point A to Point B.

"You have to be careful with whatever you are transporting," he said, whether it is weapons or Soldiers.

SSG Marie M. Legros, Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge of the delivery mission, described the RPG launchers as "duds" that would be checked for serviceability and perhaps reissued at LSA Anaconda.

Legros said the RPG launchers would be fixed or destroyed at LSA Anaconda

The Spring Valley, N.Y., resident said the mission was a pretty standard one, but she was relieved that the RPG launchers were not armed.

Obrzut wasn't able to say why the unarmed launchers were taken to LSA Anaconda, but noted that Bravo Company, 201st FSB, gets "all of the foreign weapons" from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team's area for redistribution or destruction.

He said the Soldiers at FOB Warhorse working with the confiscated weapons check for serviceability. If it is found functional it's re-issued to the Iraqi National Guard, which works with the 3rd BCT. Unserviceable weapons are demolished by "cutting them up."

SPC Amanada D. Goraczowski, who drove the five-ton stacked with RPG launchers, said her mission was just another day on the job.

The Lander, Wy., resident said her biggest concern was that the RPG launchers, which weigh between 10 to 15 pounds, stayed secure during the 45-minute trip.



SPC Amanda D. Goraczowski, a tank turret mechanic with Bravo Company, 201st Forward Support Battalion, helps unload some rocket-propelled grenade launchers.

Laundry, textile repair unit augments contractors

**STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC SHERREE CASPER
196TH MPAD**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARHORSE, BAQUBAH, Iraq - Nine laundry and textile repair specialists at this base have been repairing Desert Camouflage Uniforms and sewing on combat patches for Soldiers here since February.

The small group hails from the 10th Mountain Division's 590th Field Service Company based at Ft. Drum, N.Y.

The nine Soldiers are attached to the 201st Forward Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

The majority of the 590th is based at FOB Speicher, a place these Soldiers may be returning to soon. That is when they lose their jobs to civilian contracting counterparts with Kellogg, Brown and Root.

Although these Soldiers are also capable of setting up showers and performing laundry service, KBR workers also oversee those operations.

The small groups of laundry and textile repair specialists appear to work well together.

"Everyone has come on a one seam standard," said SGT John A. Acevedo, as he sat behind a console sewing machine.

He said the civilian equipment has been modified a little to accommodate the military mission since they

repair everything from uniforms to banners. The textile repair specialists are also tasked with patching tattered humvee seats as well as cargo canvas.

The Bronx, N.Y., resident said sometimes he and fellow launderers and sewers get chided for what some think is a "soft" Military Occupational Specialty. However, they are quick to be thanked when a crisis arises.

"When we hook them up, they don't talk down to us," he said with a big grin.

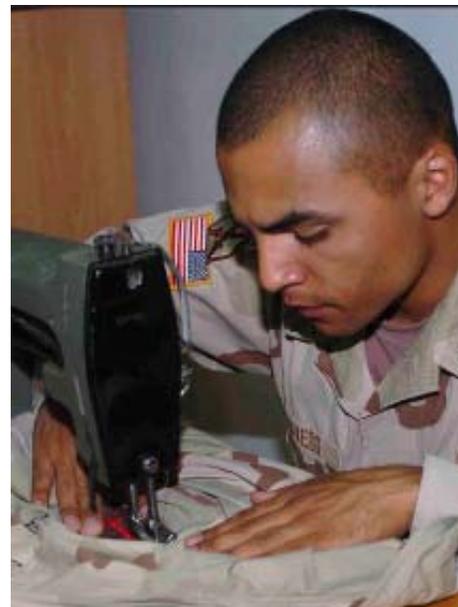
Take for example one day last April. A military convoy rolled into FOB Warhorse with one of its truck drivers in desperate need of some clean clothes. The Soldier had been on the road for two weeks and only had one clean DCU remaining.

"He came in and asked me if I could hook him up with some laundry," Acevedo recalled. "He asked me when he could pick up his laundry and I said at the end of the day."

Problem was the sergeant with a reserve unit only had a couple of hours before he was slated to be back on the road. Acevedo understood the dilemma and came to the rescue.

"So I said, 'Okay, I will hook you up with no problem,'" Acevedo explained. "He said, 'Gee thanks' and got all excited. He took off all his clothes in broad daylight - except his drawers - and put on his last pair of fresh clothes."

-- See *Alterations*, Page 23

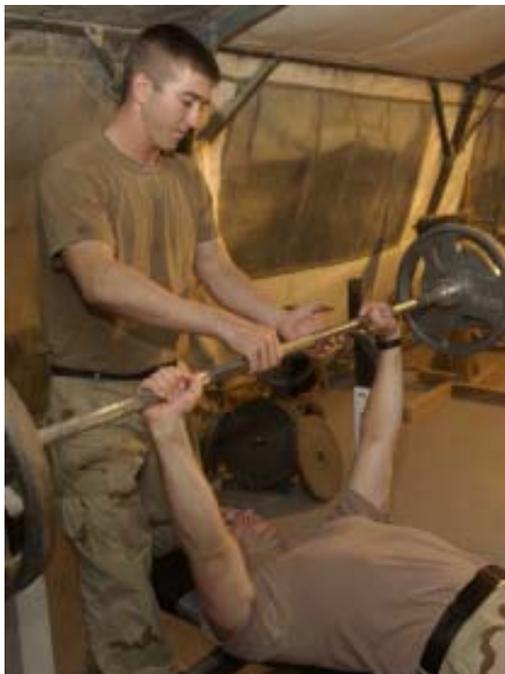


SGT John A. Acevedo of Bronx, N.Y., sews a Big Red One patch onto a shirt at Forward Operating Base Warhorse. Acevedo is attached to the 201st Forward Support Battalion.

Two brothers enjoy luxuries of deploying, working, relaxing together

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC AARON RITTER
139TH MPAD**

TIKRIT, Iraq-Many Soldiers bring a little piece of their lives with them on a deployment; pictures and gifts often decorate the Soldiers' home away from home.



The Little brothers lift weights in the unit's workout tent as part of their weekly routine while deployed to Iraq.

Not as common, however, is bringing your brother with you on a deployment, along with a shared passion. For two brothers in the Illinois Army National Guard, that is exactly what happened.

MAJ Eric Little and SSG Ryan Little are both members of the Springfield-based 232nd Corps Support Battalion, which is on a mission to provide the movement of essential equipment and supplies throughout Iraq.

The 32-year-old Eric, from Springfield, serves as executive officer for the 232nd, responsible for overseeing all of the unit operations. His brother, Ryan, 24, is a Plains, Ill., resident. He's the unit's motor sergeant, ensuring that all of the vehicles remain mission capable.

Despite the difference in their ranks and duties, their strong relationship and enthusiasm for stock car racing brings the brothers together at the end of the day.

"The really cool part is we can shut the door and just forget I'm a major and he's a staff sergeant," Eric said. "We can just be Eric and Ryan."

The Littles always considered themselves racing fans, but it was not until three years ago that the brothers, along with their other brothers, Kevin and Travis, were able to afford their own stock car to race.

Eric and Ryan said they are blessed with wives who enjoy racing as much as they do, adding that their next goal is to get Eric's son, Jake, into the driver's seat.

Before the deployment, Eric managed the race team, setting up the car and supervising finances, while Ryan raced the car. Ryan said that relationship is somewhat paralleled here in Iraq.

"He's the brains of the operation. When something didn't go well or if I got into some sort of accident, he'd be quick to correct me on

a certain angle I should have taken or which guy I should have passed on a turn," Ryan said. "He's my big brother and my executive officer and I think he'd be disappointed with me if I let him down with my work over here."

Since the brothers can no longer race, the Jacksonville and Macon Speedways are supporting the siblings by sending them monthly videotapes of races. The Macon Speedway also had a race in honor of the brothers on May 31.

Ryan said they have always been close, but they talk a lot more about life and family now. Their ability to be there for one another has been a big advantage of deploying together.

"It's nice to have him here because we have our own jobs and work spaces but if I ever need someone to talk to about family, he and I can talk about it," Ryan said. "I feel a little more at home with him and we enjoy talking about plans, and stuff we'll do when we get back home."

Eric said throughout their lives, they've always been friends on top of it all, and related well to one another. They did everything together, from racing and four-wheeling to camping and canoeing. Now he is happy to share this experience in Iraq with his brother.

"It's been great having my little brother here because he's also my best friend," Eric said. "So when times get dull, we can just have some 'brother time' and watch a race, work out together or simply talk."

Ryan said he thinks serving in Iraq together has helped their wives cope with the deployment because they are going through the same thing at home.

"I think it's a lot better to know they can fall back on each other as Eric and I are doing," Ryan said. "They keep each other happy and busy and I think it has brought them a lot closer as well."

-- See *Brothers*, Page 23

Baqubah action earns four 3rd BCT Soldiers ARCOMs for valor

**STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC SHERREE CASPER
196TH MPAD**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARHORSE, BAQUBAH, Iraq - Three Soldiers from the 4th Platoon, F Troop, 4th Cavalry, here were awarded Army Commendation Medals with valor for their heroism while combating enemy forces in Baqubah, Iskandariah and Najaf, Iraq, last April.

Another Soldier from 2nd Platoon, F Troop, 4th Cavalry was awarded an Army Commendation Medal with valor for his heroic actions when his wingman's vehicle was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade just north of FOB Warhorse April 10.

COL Dana J.H. Pittard, commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, awarded the medals during a brief ceremony on Aug. 6.

Pittard also presented CPT Thomas H. Johnson Jr., outgoing commander of F Troop, 4th Cavalry, with a Combat Infantry Badge. Johnson has been tapped for an assignment with 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 1st Infantry Division.

ARCOMs with valor for fighting during the first battle of Baqubah were awarded to 1LT Carl E. Gregory of Stilwell, Okla.; SGT Mitchell W. Wagner of North Canton, Ohio and SPC Paul Carrisoza of Hemet, Calif. PFC John M. White of Anchorage, Ala., was awarded the ARCOM with valor for aiding a wounded

Soldier.

Gregory said he, Wagner and Carrisoza were attached to a tank company during the first battle of Baqubah from April 11 to 13, and they opened an avenue of approach to attack into the city's center.

In a sworn statement recommending the three men for ARCOMs with valor, CPT John S. Combs, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 63rd Armor, wrote that the three Soldiers "undoubtedly saved the lives of many Soldiers" with their "aggressive attitude and willingness to fight under less than ideal conditions."

While a platoon sergeant's driver on a reconnaissance humvee, White saw his wingman's vehicle struck by an RPG and "instinctively grabbed the Combat Lifesaver's bag and while receiving enemy small arms fire, moved tactically to the aid of his wounded comrade," witnesses reported.

White was lauded for maintaining "selfless service, composure, courage and discipline under extreme circumstances."

"I'm very proud of you all," Pittard told the Soldiers of F Troop, 4th Cavalry. "You've got to know that we are making a difference in Diyala, especially Baqubah."

The 3rd BCT commander said whenever there is a fight he can call on F Troop, 4th Cavalry to complete the mission.

"Baqubah is a relatively safer place because of you," Pittard said. "Have faith in what you are doing."



1LT Carl E. Gregory, of 4th Platoon, F Troop, 4th Cavalry, is awarded an Army Commendation Medal with valor from COL Dana J.H. Pittard, 3rd Brigade Combat Team commander.

-- Alterations from Page 22

The truck driver then threw the soiled DCU he had been wearing into a bag heaping with dirty laundry.

"We took it in and washed it," Acevedo said.

The washers and dryers used by the military laundry specialists are designed to clean a large load within an hour.

"When he came to pick up (his clothes) he was so happy," Acevedo said. "He said, 'You don't know how it is out on the road.' I said, 'I probably don't because I work around laundry and am always clean.'"

Acevedo said it "felt good" to be able to help a fellow Soldier in a time of need. The textile repair specialists can sew on as many as 200 patches a day and make as many as 150 repairs.

"I feel that we are making a difference," Acevedo said. And sometimes it's an international one.

They have sewn and repaired clothing for Georgian soldiers as well as local nationals based here. He said the foreign soldiers are very nice people and "... are just like us. They need what we need."

While knowledge of AR670-1 - the regulation for wear and appearance of the United States Army's military uniforms and accessories - is of little use when tackling badges for wear on foreign fatigues, sometimes body language helps.

"We play it by ear where things need to be sewn," Acevedo said. "Sometimes we don't know if it is upside down or right-side up."

He said usually by pointing to the way something should be - whether a patch or a hem - the communication barrier is usually crossed.

"They are just as grateful as anyone else when they get help," he said. And like many of their American counterparts, those who get things sewn or tailored often think there's a fee.

"They think they need to pay us," Acevedo said. "We tell them this is one Army. We don't charge."

Need a 1st ID combat patch sewn on?

Not only is there no charge, but a Soldier needn't bring the patch. The group has an ample supply on hand.

Acevedo thinks it's a waste of military funding to contract out for services that he and other Soldiers have

been trained to do. He said the military is also constantly spending money to upgrade the textile repair and laundry equipment.

"I don't see the sense to hire civilians and put them in harm's way when we are trained to handle not only our special skills duty but combat," he said.

Those feelings are shared by many of his fellow textile repair specialists.

SPC Jumo Johnson, who has sewn on patches for Soldiers from FOBs Warhorse, Gabe and Normandy, thinks KBR may take over his job by the end of the month. The Warren, Ohio, resident said he's been told he'll probably be relocated at FOB Speicher and tasked with running convoys.

SPC Ulysses Sistrunk of Kinross, Mich., said the six males and three females - who make up the small textile repair contingent at FOB Warhorse - have supported the war effort in their own unique way.

Sistrunk said he's seen a lot of ripped and torn uniforms over the past six months.

And he's also sewed on his fair share of combat patches.

-- Brothers from Page 22

While there are many advantages of having a brother in a combat zone, there are also challenges associated with trying to be a professional officer and brother at the same time.

Eric said it was an honor to be the one who handed his brother his combat patch during the unit's patching ceremony, but he still worries.

"I am sometimes concerned when he goes on convoys, and I try not to be a brother but a major instead," Eric said. "Making that distinction can be hard knowing all the scary stuff that can happen in Iraq."

The brothers, however, said they try to make light of the military differences between the two of them when they can, whether it be light conversation throughout the day or spending time as simply brothers once the uniform comes off.

"I would give him a hard time saying 'you can't hang out with a sergeant' or 'you're too good for me,'" Ryan said, "and everyone in the unit understands our relationship here."

The brothers are grateful to have each other to fall back upon, and they look forward to this experience as an opportunity to spend more time with each other.

"All of the memories and experiences here are making our relationship even stronger than it was before," Eric said. "It's neat to go through this deployment with Ryan because it's something we can share forever and something we'll never forget we did."

That doesn't mean, however, that they don't look forward to getting back to the race track.

"We can't wait to get back to racing together, and hopefully we'll be able to take on a checkered flag or two," Ryan said.



MAJ Eric Little points out an error a race car made on a turn to his brother, SSG Ryan Little, while watching a videotaped recording of a stock car race from Macon Speedway after duty hours.

25th ID closes base, Iraqi city stands alone

**STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC SEAN KIMMONS
25TH ID PAO**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ALTUN KUPRI, Iraq – As a result of Altun Kupri’s devoted government and solid Iraqi Security Forces, Task Force 2-11 Field Artillery officially departed their Soldiers’ compound here September 1.

Multi-National Forces (MNF) have occupied the compound since April 2003 in order to ensure security and stability to the more than 12,000 people in Altun Kupri. In February 2004, Soldiers from 2nd Platoon “Outlaws” of Battery C, TF 2-11 FA took over military operations from the compound, which will now be used as a municipal building by the city government.

The first seeds of Democracy within Altun Kupri were planted by the MNF who resided at this compound. These seeds will continue to grow because of the city’s community, 1LT Robert Elzer, a fire direction officer with the Outlaws said during the closure ceremony.

“Since the first day of liberation, the community of Altun Kupri has led the way in the rebuilding of Iraq,” Elzer said, standing behind a podium overlooking Iraqi and MNF leaders. “With the help of a dedicated group of local leaders, schools, clinics, government buildings and infrastructure that had been long neglected have slowly been rebuilt.”

Elzer went on to say that Altun Kupri is a community of ethnic diversity, dedicated to the ideals of Democracy, who has chosen to put the needs of the community ahead of political and personal goals.

“It is the advancement of those ideals, by an entire

community that led to the decision to make Altun Kupri the first city to see the closure of a Forward Operating Base,” Elzer concluded.

Seconds later, CPT Deron Haught, the former FOB Altun Kupri commander, stepped up to the podium to address the audience. “For me and my men, this is both a sad and proud day. We’re sad to leave a place we’ve called home but proud that our efforts have enabled us to do so,” Haught said.

“I want to take a moment to thank the men who are standing here today,” Haught said as he looked at the Outlaw Soldiers. “I feel proud not because of what I have done, but because what I have watched them do. You have made me prouder than I have ever been to wear this uniform and to call myself an American.”

Haught also eliminated concern among Altun Kupri citizens attending the closure ceremony.

“I want to ensure the community you will still receive the same level of support that you have always received from us. Our commitment to this community has not changed,” Haught said. “Altun Kupri will always be my second home — a home that has waited three decades for this day.”

During the Outlaws’ time in Altun Kupri, they have assisted in the relocation of an Iraqi National Guard company to assist in the city and also helped fund renovations to the Iraqi Police station.

Over the past months, both of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) have assumed more and more security operations within the city as part of the transition of authority to the Iraqi people.

Now with Altun Kupri’s ISF running all security missions, the Outlaws have left the city’s stability in their hands.

Because of a well-trained ISF and competent government in the city, the Outlaws are confident that Altun Kupri is ready to move forward on their own.

“I feel confident that the town of Altun Kupri is



Hana, far left, an 8-year-old Altun Kupri girl, shares the load of an extension cord after the closure ceremony with PFC Jon Raiford, an FDC chart operator with the Outlaws.

now stable and that their security forces and government can take care of themselves,” said SPC Lawrence Chandra, a M249 gunner with the Outlaws.

“We have trained their security forces to be one of the best in Iraq with extensive training on weapons and overall on just about everything a Soldier should know. Also, we have trained government officials during council meetings almost on a daily basis,” Chandra said.

Banks improved, reopened

**STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC SEAN KIMMONS
25TH ID PAO**

KIRKUK, Iraq – As part of their mission to improve economic growth and development of the Kirkuk Province, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team’s Economic Development Team reopened two banks on August 29 after they were renovated with Commander’s Emergency Relief Program funds.

Devastated by fire and looting in last year’s war, the Baba Gurgur bank was renovated with more than \$29,000 for structural, plumbing and electrical repairs.

The Baba Gurgur bank offers eight different services to approximately 15,000 banking individuals, government accounts and private businesses in Kirkuk.

The second bank EDT facilitated funds for was the



SPC Richard Rodriguez, a driver for HHC, TF 1-21 INF, pulls security outside the Rasheed-Baba Gurgur Bank in Kirkuk during its reopening ceremony August 29.

Rafadain bank, which is the oldest bank in the city that was in need of serious repairs.

Due to faulty plumbing and inclement weather, the Rafadain bank was suffering from mildew and water damage. Also, the vault which stored a weekly balance of 3.5 Billion Iraqi Dinar and \$800,000 U.S. Dollars was secured by a busted gate.

More than \$43,000 from CERP funds paid for the renovations, plumbing and electrical problems within the Rafadain bank. The funds also covered the installation of air conditioning units bought by the Coalition Provincial Authority.

Bafreen Hana, who has worked at the Rafadain bank for 23 years, is pleased with the improvements to her workspace.

“It is a very well [renovated] building,” Hana said through an interpreter. “There is good furniture, it is very clean and new A/Cs, which makes the employees very comfortable when they work.”

Hana went on to say she is grateful for the assistance from the EDT and without them the bank would be in bad condition.

“If they didn’t do anything we’d have big problems and under these circumstances it would be a horrible situation,” she said.

Following its improvements, the Rafadain bank becomes more of a key player in Kirkuk’s economy with its 34,000 bankers, government accounts and private businesses who utilize its banking services.

“We realize that these [renovated] banks are really to show the locals how much of an impact the banking system will have on the local economy,” said SGT Carlos Ustoy, the EDT noncommissioned officer-in-charge. “These two projects alone affect many people who collect salaries and pensions — it’s a good way to reach out to the public.”

The banking system in this province is still in its infancy stage. The EDT is planning to do similar renovations to the other 12 state-run banks in hopes to increase the economy throughout the province, said Ustoy, who is also a Soldier with Detachment D, 451st Civil Affairs Battalion out of Pasadena, TX.

But how can banks that are pleasing to the eye alter the economy of a province with one million people strong? It secures the confidence of local and international banking customers for one, Ustoy said.

“Instead of seeing a substandard bank where you wouldn’t want to store the money you have just earned, [bank customers] can go to a bank that actually looks like a bank,” Ustoy said.

An improved economy could also safeguard Multi-National Forces and Iraqi people against Anti-Iraqi Forces that use the weak economy as a recruiting tool, said CPT Don Herzog, a financial advisor with the EDT.

“The bottom line is that we help create a stable economy here, and by helping the economy in the Kirkuk Province it will have a direct effect against Anti-Iraqi Forces,” said Herzog, who also commands Det. D, 106th Finance Bn. from the 1st Infantry Division.

“With a stable economy, the majority of people in Iraq will have productive and safe lives on a day-to-day basis; therefore, they’ll be more likely to work against any AIF efforts.”

Right now, only the second of three phases in Kirkuk Province’s banking system makeover is underway. The second phase is to renovate other banks throughout the province and the third phase will be to connect the banks using internet capabilities.

“It’s like any branch of your bank in the states. If you do a transaction that transaction will be sent out to all the other banks so your account will read the same,” Herzog said.

Medical Ops Center tracks patients with patience

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT W. WAYNE MARLOW
1ST ID PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq - Originally, SGM Jesse Davis had a July 2004 date for reporting to the 1st Infantry Division. When asked if he would bump that up six months, he said yes after giving it "no thought whatsoever."

He has no regrets, as Davis gets much job satisfaction in his role as chief medical operations noncommissioned officer for the division's medical operations center.

Davis, from Mobile, Ala., and the rest of the DMOC are tasked with keeping track of the division's casualties. They also must track non-division Soldiers who are injured in the Big Red One's area of operation.

The DMOC Soldiers are assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Co., Division Support Command. There are five echelons a casualty can be sent to, starting with the battalion aid station for the least serious, to patients that have to be sent out of theater. All the while, DMOC Soldiers track them. Besides the numbers involved, the job requires a lot of persistence, Davis said.

"A lot of times, you call when they're trying to treat a patient and they don't have the time to talk to you," Davis said. "Or maybe there's artillery fire coming in and no one's going to be able to get on the phone to give you a patient's information."

DMOC personnel take a proactive approach, monitoring radios and perusing significant activities reports. They even look at the division's operations that day to get an idea of how many casualties might be expected.

This helps some, though it is of limited value, said SSG Louie Jimenez, a patient administration NCO from Atlanta.

"Most casualties are the result of roadside bombs," he said. "They come during convoys, not actual operations. We try to anticipate the casualties but it's limited as far as predicting the numbers." But when they do happen, Jimenez and the others spring into action.

"Constant communication with all echelons is required," Jimenez said. "I track all movement of patients. The division relies on me to know where the patients are."

"It takes a lot of attention to detail. It takes a lot of knowledge about the different



CPT Robert Ashburn, left, and SGM Jesse Davis preside at a meeting of the 1st Infantry Division's Medical Operations Center on FOB Speicher.

echelons of care," he said. We want to provide the operations center with the most expeditious, most accurate information possible. We want to be able to tell them what the patient's diagnosis is, and what their prognosis is." But while there may be a great urgency to get the information out, time takes a back seat to the truth, Davis said.

"When a Soldier is injured, everybody is looking for information, from the general to the platoon sergeant. Everybody wants the information now," he said. "But when a patient enters the hospital, it could be hours before there's reliable information on the condition." The axiom about truth being the first casualty of war frequently rings true when it comes to patient injuries.

"The information is often sketchy at first," Davis said. "We'll hear that it's a head injury when it's actually heat, or vice versa." And within minutes of an injury, the DMOC's phone can be ringing, with someone wanting an update. To help gather information quickly, DMOC Soldiers consider where the injury occurred and determine the most likely place the casualty will be transported, then contact that place. Besides patient tracking, DMOC Soldiers are responsible for making sure units have adequate medical supplies and personnel.

"We pretty much have the big picture of the division's medical care and support," Davis said.

CPT Bashiri Phillips agreed. An Enterprise, Ala., native, Phillips serves as the DMOC's operations officer.

"We have to have the tactical information as well as the combat service support information," he said. "We have to be able to tie the whole picture together and ensure everyone has access to medicine and supplies."

It's a huge responsibility we have to the families and the Soldiers themselves. "Teamwork is vital to the DMOC's success, according to CPT Robert Ashburn, DMOC's medical planner and Lawrence, Kan., native.

"Key to this office is not just one thing," Ashburn said. "It's what everybody does, from patient administration guys tracking down patients. Knowing current medical situation in the division, it's not just one element. It's always different. It's not a stagnant office. I enjoy trying to help get information out to the division."



Soldiers with the 1st Infantry Division's Medical Operations Center go over plans during a meeting at Forward Operating Base Speicher.

Fitness center opened named for fallen Soldier

STORY BY
SPC SHERREE CASPER
196TH MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARHORSE, BAQUBAH, Iraq - The Morale, Welfare and Recreation's fitness center here was dedicated Aug. 6, for a North Carolina Army National Guardsman killed during a firefight in Baqubah.

CPT Christopher Scott Cash died June 24 when his Bradley Fighting Vehicle was attacked by small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades.

"This is a fitting tribute to CPT Cash," said COL Dana J.H. Pittard, 3rd Brigade Combat Team's commander.

Pittard addressed Soldiers of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry, which Cash commanded at

the time of his death. He noted that Cash was keen on physical fitness and prided himself as a marathon runner.

"We will not forget CPT Cash," Pittard said.

Remembering his fallen leader, 1LT Max Stroud, told the company of Soldiers as well as others attending the dedication ceremony, that Cash was an avid runner preparing for the Boston Marathon when the unit was called to support Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"We'll all remember him," said Stroud, executive officer of Alpha Company.

An exercise physiologist with Pitt Memorial Hospital in Greenville, N.C., Cash ran to raise awareness and money for "noble causes like leukemia and cancer research," according to a memorial program.

"His personal courage and selflessness make him a model for others to follow," was among the reflections in the program. "His humor and warm smile made anyone in presence feel at ease. He touched the lives of many Soldiers and will be dearly missed by family and friends."

Pittard said Cash will always be remembered as a member of the Order of the Wolverines.

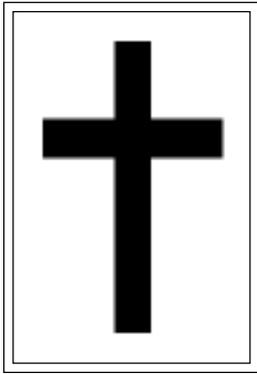
Enlisting in the United States Army on Jan. 31, 1986, Cash attended Airborne School that same year. He graduated from Ranger School in 1988.

Cash left the Army after serving with the 82nd Airborne Division to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education from East Carolina University.

He joined the North Carolina Army National Guard and was commissioned an infantry officer on Aug. 4, 1995 and became commander of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry.

At the time of his death, Cash lived in Winterville, N.C., with his wife, Jennifer Dawn, and two sons, Christopher Scott Cash Jr., 13, and Matthew Styron Cash, 11.

Pittard asked the North Carolina Army National Guardsmen returning home to stop in and pay a visit to the family so that they will know what Cash meant to the unit.



**A Meditation given on the
occasion of the
Memorial Ceremony for
SPC Charles L. Neeley
August 30, 2004
By Chaplain
(MAJ) James W. Rose
167th CSG**

Dear friends and fellow soldiers,

We gather together to pay tribute to SPC Charles Neeley; to honor his life, to remember what he meant to us and to believe in the dreams he longed to fulfill.

We are here to share the joys of his life and the sorrow of his death. We come here to comfort and support one another. It is here that we are free to pour our grief, release our anger. Together, we face the emptiness and finality of death and in the midst of all our thoughts and feelings to rest on the promise that God cares.

Upon hearing of SPC Neeley's death, I spent some time in the Company area visiting with soldiers who knew him well and had worked with him over this past year. From the stories they told, I quickly drew the conclusion that he was a Soldier I would have enjoyed knowing.

There were two common themes that struck me. The first was mischievous, in the playful sense of the word, not malicious. He was one who thought differently, always interested in another point of view, willing to think outside the box, curious about the world he lived in. He was a person who wanted to drink deeply from the fountain of life, to be filled up with all its possibilities. To me, these are the characteristics of a thoughtful and genuine individual.

The other comment that caught my attention concerning SPC Neeley, centered on the idea that Charles was learning to be a Soldier. As I thought upon that phrase it came to me that we cannot say that about everyone. It is one thing to go through basic training, to learn soldiering skills, but that is not the same. Anyone can put on the uniform and go through the motions. It takes a special individual to come to the realization that being a true soldier includes a commitment to a way of life. SPC Neeley was dedicated to learning what it truly meant to call oneself a soldier.

I would dare say that even our esteemed leaders here with us this morning, those who through their military career have exemplified the very ethos of what it means to be a soldier would say, even now, they too are learning to be Soldiers.

Specialist Neeley in the eyes of his comrades was held in this same esteem. Learning to be a Soldier, not just going through the acts of soldiering, but taking on what being a soldier really meant. He concentrated his life, his energy, his skills, and his personality on living the life of a soldier.

On the morning of August 25, SPC Neeley was a part of a mission. He had options. He could have played sick, begged off the mission to go to sick call. He could have tried to find some other excuse. He could have just disobeyed the order. In fact he could have decided long ago not even to come to Iraq. But on August 25, SPC Neeley chose to do his duty without question or hesitation. In doing his duty SPC Neeley demonstrated that he was indeed learning what it meant to be a soldier.

The truth of this statement is realized when we reflect on the words of General Robert E. Lee, "Duty then is the most sublime word of the language. Do your duty in all things. You can not do more. You should never wish to do less."

The faithful performance of one's duty, from the private to the general is the very sinew which holds this institution together and makes possible the successful completion of its mission. Charles Neeley is a part of that great tradition. Individuals who have committed themselves to discovering what it means to be a Soldier by way of their deep devotion to duty.

May each of us here this morning, upon facing that great day when we cross over the threshold of eternity. On that day when we are called to account for our life's work; to appraise how we have lived out our commitments -in that moment- may all of us be worthy to stand shoulder to shoulder with SPC Charles Neeley, unflinching in our resolve, and say with integrity and fidelity, we too faithfully performed our duty.

God bless SPC Neeley and his devotion to all that we hold to be true, to all that we hold dear in our hearts.



SSG Christopher E. Cutchall
D Troop, 4th Cavalry
September 29, 2003

2LT Todd J. Bryant
C Company, 1-34 Armor
October 31, 2003

SSG Gary L. Collins
A Company, 1-16 Infantry
November 8, 2003

SSG Mark D. Vasquez
A Company, 1-16 Infantry
November 8, 2003

SPC Josph L. Lister
B Company, 1-34 Armor
November 20, 2003

SPC Thomas J. Sweet II
Service Battery, 1-5 Field Artillery
November 27, 2003

SPC Uday Singh
C Company, 1-34 Armor
December 1, 2003

SGT Ryan C. Young
A Company, 1-16 Infantry
December 2, 2003

SGT Jarrod W. Black
B Company, 1-34 Armor
December 12, 2004

SGT Dennis A. Corral
C Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
January 1, 2004

SFC Gregory B. Hicks
B Troop, 1-9 Cavalry
January 8, 2004

SPC William R. Sturges Jr.
B Troop, 1-9 Cavalry
January 24, 2004

SPC Jason K. Chappell
B Troop, 1-9 Cavalry
January 24, 2004

SGT Randy S. Rosenberg
B Troop, 1-9 Cavalry
January 24, 2004

CPT Matthew J. August
B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
January 27, 2004

SFC James T. Hoffman
B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
January 27, 2004

SGT Travis A. Moothart
B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
January 27, 2004

SSG Sean G. Landrus
B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
January 29, 2004

PFC Nichole M. Frye
415th Civil Affairs Battalion
February 16, 2004

2LT Jeffrey C. Graham
C Company, 1-34 Armor
February 19, 2004

SPC Roger G. Ling
C Company, 1-34 Armor
February 19, 2004

SFC Richard S. Gottfried
HHC, Division Support Command
March 9, 2004

SSG Joe L. Dunigan Jr.
B Company, 1-16 Infantry
March 11, 2004

In Memory of Task Force Danger and 1st Brigade Combat Team Soldiers killed while serving in Iraq through September 11, 2004

SPC Christopher K. Hill

B Company, 1-16 Infantry
March 11, 2004

CPT John F. Kurth

B Company, 1-18 Infantry
March 13, 2004

SPC Jason C. Ford

B Company, 1-18 Infantry
March 13, 2004

SPC Jocelyn L. Carrasquillo

HHC, 1-120 Infantry
March 13, 2004

SPC Tracy L. Laramore

B Company, 1-18 Infantry
March 17, 2004

SPC Clint R. Matthews

B Company, 1-18 Infantry
March 19, 2004

PFC Ernest H. Sutphin

B Battery, 2-11 Field Artillery
March 19, 2004

PFC Jason C. Ludlam

HHC, 2-2 Infantry
March 19, 2004

PFC Dustin L. Kreider

B Company, 1-26 Infantry
March 21, 2004

SPC Adam D. Froehlich

C Battery, 1-6 Field Artillery
March 25, 2004

1LT Doyle M. Hufstедler

B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
March 31, 2004

SPC Sean R. Mitchell

B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
March 31, 2004

SPC Michael G. Karr Jr.

B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
March 31, 2004

PFC Cleston C. Raney

B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
March 31, 2004

PVT Brandon L. Davis

B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
March 31, 2004

PFC John D. Amos II

C Company, 1-21 Infantry
April 4, 2004

SGT Lee D. Todacheene

HHC, 1-77 Armor
April 6, 2004

SFC Marvin L. Miller

C Troop, 1-4 Cavalry
April 7, 2004

SPC Isaac M. Nieves

A Company, 82nd Engineer Battalion
April 8, 2004

SFC Raymond E. Jones

C Company, 1-7 Field Artillery
April 9, 2004

SSG Toby W. Mallet

C Company, 1-7 Field Artillery
April 9, 2004

SPC Allen J. Vandayburg

C Company, 2-2 Infantry
April 9, 2004

SPC Peter G. Enos

HHC, 1-7 Field Artillery
April 9, 2004

SGT William C. Eckhart

F Troop, 4th Cavalry
April 10, 2004

PFC Nathan P. Brown

C Company, 2-108 Infantry
April 11, 2004

SSG Victor A. Rosaleslomeli

A Company, 2-2 Infantry
April 13, 2004

SGT Christopher Ramirez

B Company, 1-16 Infantry
April 14, 2004

SPC Richard K. Trevithick

C Company, 9th Engineer Battalion
April 14, 2004

SGT Brian M. Wood

A Company, 9th Engineer Battalion
April 16, 2004

SPC Marvin A. Camposiles

HHC, 1-26 Infantry
April 17, 2004

PFC Shawn C. Edwards

B Company, 121st Signal Battalion
April 23, 2004

SPC Martin W. Kondor

A Company, 1-63 Armor
April 29, 2004

SGT Joshua S. Ladd

367th Maintenance Company
April 30, 2004

SPC Trevor A. Win'e

24th Quartermaster Company
May 1, 2004

CPT John E. Tipton

HHC, 1-16 Infantry
May 2, 2004

SSG Todd E. Nunes

A Company, 1-21 Infantry
May 2, 2004

CPT Christopher J. Kenny

F Troop, 4th Cavalry
May 3, 2004

SSG Marvin R. Sprayberry III

HHC, 2-2 Infantry
May 3, 2004

SGT Gregory L. Wahl

F Troop, 4th Cavalry
May 3, 2004

PFC Lyndon A. Marcus

F Troop, 4th Cavalry
May 3, 2004

SPC James J. Holmes

C Company, 141st Engineer Battalion
May 8, 2004

SPC Phillip D. Brown

B Company, 141st Engineer Battalion
May 8, 2004

SPC Marcos O. Nolasco

B Company, 1-33 Field Artillery
May 18, 2004

SSG Joseph P. Garyantes

B Company, 1-63 Armor
May 18, 2004

SPC Michael C. Campbell

HHT, 1-4 Cavalry
May 19, 2004

SPC Owen D. Witt

B Troop, 1-4 Cavalry
May 23, 2004

PFC Richard H. Rosas

3-62 Air Defense Artillery, 10th Mt. Div.
May 25, 2004

PFC James P. Lambert

3-63 Air Defense Artillery, 10th Mt. Div.
May 25, 2004

PFC Marcus J. Johnson

D Battery, 4-3 Air Defense Artillery
June 1, 2004

CPT Humayun S. M. Khan

HHC, 201st Forward Support Bn.
June 8, 2004

PFC Jason N. Lynch

C Company, 1-6 Field Artillery
June 18, 2004

2LT Andre D. Tyson

A Company, 579th Engineer Battalion
June 22, 2004

SPC Patrick R. McCaffrey Sr.

A Company, 579th Engineer Battalion
June 22, 2004

CPT Christopher S. Cash

A Company, 1-120 Infantry
June 24, 2004

SPC Daniel A. Desens

A Company, 1-120 Infantry
June 24, 2004

2LT Brian D. Smith

A Company, 1-34 Armor
July 2, 2004

PFC Samuel R. Bowen

B Company, 216th Engineer Battalion
July 7, 2004

SGT Robert E. Colvill

HHC, 1-26 Infantry
July 8, 2004

SPC Sonny G. Sampler

HHC, 1-26 Infantry
July 8, 2004

SPC Collier Barcus

HHC, 1-26 Infantry
July 8, 2004

SPC William R. Emanuel

HHC, 1-26 Infantry
July 8, 2004

SPC Joseph M. Garmback Jr.

HHC, 1-26 Infantry
July 8, 2004

MSG Linda A. Tarango-Griess

267th Ordnance Company
July 11, 2004

SGT Jeremy J. Fischer

267th Ordnance Company
July 11, 2004

SGT Dustin W. Peters

314th Logistics Readiness Squadron
July 11, 2004

PFC Torry D. Harris

12th Chemical Company
July 13, 2004

SFC David A. Hartman

401st Transportation Company
July 17, 2004

PFC Nicholas H. Blodgett

A Troop, 1-4 Cavalry
July 21, 2004

SGT Tatijana Reed

66th Transportation Company
July 22, 2004

PFC Torey J. Dantzler

66th Transportation Company
July 22, 2004

SPC Nicholas Zangara

C Company, 1-7 Field Artillery
July 24, 2004

SGT Deforest L. Talbert

C Company, 1-150 Armor
July 27, 2004

PFC Joseph F. Herndon

A Company, 1-27 Infantry
July 29, 2004

SPC Anthony J. Dixon

B Troop, 1-4 Cavalry
August 1, 2004

SGT Armando Hernandez

B Troop, 1-4 Cavalry
August 1, 2004

SPC Donald R. McCune II

1-161 Infantry, 81st BCT
August 5, 2004

CPT Andrew R. Houghton

A Troop, 1-4 Cavalry
August 9, 2004

1LT Neil Anthony Santoriello

1-34 Armor, 1st BCT
August 13, 2004

SGT Daniel M. Shepherd

1-16 Infantry Regiment
August 15, 2004

1LT Charles L. Wilkins III

216th Engineer Bn., 264th Engineer Gp.
August 20, 2004

PFC Ryan A. Martin

216th Engineer Bn., 264th Engineer Gp.
August 20, 2004

2LT Matthew R. Stovall

401st Transportation Company, 167th CSG
August 22, 2004

SPC Charles L. Neeley

454th Transportation Company, 232nd CSG
August 25, 2004

A1C Carl L. Anderson

494th AEF, 835th CSG
August 29, 2004

SPC Joseph C. Thibodeaux

HHC, 2nd Brigade, 25th ID
September 1, 2004

SPC Brandon M. Read

125th Transportation Company, 167th CSG
September 6, 2004

SPC Michael Martinez

A Company, 1-6 Field Artillery
September 8, 2004

SPC Edgar P. Daclan Jr.

HHC, 1-18 Infantry
September 10, 2004

SPC Marva I. Gomez

A Company, 828th Finance Detachment
September 11, 2004

Blue Spaders ceremony

PFC Levarus E. Best, a personnel administration specialist from 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, sings the "Star Spangled Banner" prior to a Purple Heart ceremony at Forward Operating Base Brassfield-Mora August 2. (Photo by SFC Chuck Joseph)

