

Sheiks gather in reconciliation effort

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

1BCT, 1st Cavalry Division
Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — Sunni and Shia tribal sheiks from the Iraqi villages of Aqar Qaf, Bassam, Salamiyat and Fira Shia moved closer to reconciliation July 16 during a meeting facilitated by the 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment.

The sheiks, who are putting aside their differences to band together to end violence and bloodshed in their villages, met to discuss ways to start neighborhood watch programs made up of volunteers to protect their communities and improve the security situation there.

According to Lt. Col. Kenneth Kamper, commander, 1st Bn., 37th FA Regt., whose Soldiers currently operate in the sheiks' villages, one of the major reasons for the meeting has been that the sheiks are tired of attacks on innocent civilians and coalition forces in their neighborhoods and want to put an end to the presence of Al Qaeda and other insurgent groups operating there.

"This is a monumental meeting," said Kamper.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

Sunni and Shia sheiks from the areas of Bassam, Aqar Qaf, Salamiyat and Fira Shia, Iraq discuss the issue of creating volunteer neighborhood watch programs in their villages during a reconciliation meeting, facilitated by the 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, on Camp Taji, Iraq July 16.

"This is the first time in more than three years that these tribes have sat down to talk—leaders from the west side who are Sunni and those from the east which are Shia.

"This has been a very positive step on their parts, and it's important to have them involved in the government process that will lead to volunteers providing security for their own villages," Kamper added.

"It has been the result of about six weeks of work to bring them to the table and for this first meeting we're offering them a neutral ground here on Camp Taji."

Following on similar efforts in Anbar province and other places, such as Falahat, Iraq, where neighborhood watch programs are showing success in reducing violence with volunteers manning traffic

control points and reporting insurgent activities to both coalition and Iraqi security forces, the sheiks opened the discussion on how best to implement their own volunteer program.

During the meeting, sheiks determined that each village will be responsible for providing its own volunteers for security within their own respective

(See **SHEIKS**, page 4)

"It is a paradoxical but profoundly true and important principle of life that the most-likely way to reach a goal is to be aiming not at that goal itself but at some more ambitious goal beyond it."

Arnold Toynbee, English historian and philosopher



CSM Neil Ciotola
Command Sergeant Major
Multi-National Corps - Iraq

CSM Ciotola sends.....mentorship

This letter was written by Command Sgt. Maj. Neil Ciotola, the Multi-National Corps - Iraq command sergeant major, to a staff sergeant who is becoming a sergeant first class soon. This doesn't just apply to the staff sergeant, but rather to all NCOs.

On to the issue at hand; any additional words of advice for a Sergeant Audie Murphy Club member and soon-to-be senior NCO? Well staff sergeant, you know me, I always have something to say.

Insomuch as leadership is concerned, I've forgotten more than I ever hope to remember. I used to worry about that until I finally realized that this is a team sport. So long as we can lean on one another we'll all be fine.

As I mentioned to you a while back, you are a top 10 percenter; your @#! is forever staring people in the face as they look up at that flag pole. Never forget that you are being watched, observed, assessed, measured and scrutinized even when you think you are not.

Be the first and last in everything; first to arrive and last to go home or sleep. Check everything and force your platoon leader to do the same, even if it's after you put everyone down for the night. Some of my fondest memories with my platoon leaders and company and troop commanders were trooping the line in the late hours of the evening or early hours of the morning--just the two of us.

Remember to be consistent with your troopers. Be perpetually optimistic. Lift up you troopers spiritually, emotionally and professionally every day. Be that guy or gal who literally lifts up the youngster who stumbles on patrol or in life.

Don't permit phallic measuring contests in combat. This is a team sport. You do everything as a team: clear a house, climb a wall, walk a street, conduct a combat logistics patrol, prep for any mission and any task. Scrutinize each other.

Be an overt example. Ask one of your privates to check you out each day to show your troopers that it takes a village. Praise your youngsters overtly when they ID a deficiency and do it correctly and respectfully. This has nothing to do with trust; it has everything to do with preserving the fighting strength.

As it relates to trust, remind and hold accountable all your young sergeants to this axiom: All men are valorous and all women are virtuous until proven otherwise. We as the leader parent must first extend trust in order for our subordinates to prove that they are trustworthy.

Leadership is all about assuming a modicum of risk. We don't gamble with the lives of our troopers--that's why we check everything!

Teach your lieutenant everything you possibly can. Do not permit your troopers to address the lieutenant as "LT." If they want to use a short term of endearment of respect for their officer or leader, have them try the one syllable word that does it all: Sir or Ma'am.

Ensure your lieutenant understands he is there to lead, not make friends. If your officer wants to be a private, he should have become one. Show your officer what it is to be selfless. Teach him there is no such thing as sergeants' business; everything that happens in a unit is the officer's business.

We as NCOs do our job--we spell it DUTY! And finally, remind your officer they are not necessarily smarter than their enlisted. To lead is a test of character. Teach your officer to LEAD!

I've got lots more advice, but I'm not going anywhere. All we senior NCOs and officers are here for you and your battle buddies. You don't have to have all the answers. Together, all of us do. Sometimes we forget that we're all here to lean on one another. We're all here to teach, to inspire, to carry one another, to recognize and bring out the best in not only ourselves but everyone around us.

I was and remain very proud of you young staff sergeant. Take charge, train your troopers, move out, draw fire, PID those sons-a-@#! and kill or capture 'em all. Teach your Soldiers to recognize and embrace all the good people both here in Iraq and back home.

And finally, please tell all in your brigade how very, very proud I am of them all. After 31 years in the Army, I can't help but have strong feelings for our combat support and combat service support troopers. All of you, every one of you, lifts and sustains those at the tip of the spear every day.

Our logistics troopers seldom reap the recognition our trigger pullers do, yet they fight to provide superlative support to them every day.

Now that's devotion, that's love, that's selflessness. That, young sergeant, is commitment!

This letter originally appeared in the MNC-I publication Phantom News, and has been re-printed here in its entirety.

TAJI TIMES

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**U.S. Army photo by
Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st
Cav. Div. Public Affairs**

Left: Sgt. Anthony Santos, a combat engineer for Sapper Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment who hails from Santa Rita, Guam and Killeen, Texas, and his counterpart, an Iraqi Army engineer with the 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) observe as an Iraqi Army back hoe clears reeds from a canal near Al Awad, Iraq July 18.

Inset photo: An Iraqi Army engineer gives hand signals to a back hoe operator, another Iraqi Army engineer, directing him where to dig during an effort to clear areas where insurgents have hidden weapons in the past.

Stallion engineers assist Iraqi Army in Al Awad

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

1st Brigade Combat Team

1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

AL AWAD, Iraq -- Engineers from Company E "Sappers," 2nd "Stallion" Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment are continuing a partnership here with their Iraqi Army counterparts from the 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army (IA) Division (Mechanized) to rob insurgents of the ability to wage attacks against civilians, Iraqi security forces and coalition forces.

The partnership here was evident July 18 as they worked in a joint effort to re-shape terrain by clearing reeds and knocking down structures in which insurgents could hide and from which they could launch their attacks. Using Iraqi Army backhoes, Iraqi troops pulled reeds out of drainage canals and also used the equipment to take down man-made structures in a field as the Sappers pulled security and observed the work in the event their Iraqi comrades needed help.

Both the IA and U.S. engineers worked in support of the local civilian populace as well as Iraqi security forces and Soldiers from Companies B and C, 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt. currently operating out of the area. Troops from Co. B and C along with IA troops are working from

nearby patrol bases that have been recently established to maintain a presence and keep the area secure.

Sapper Co. commander, Capt. John Burescia, a Dickinson, Texas native, said he sees the significant role the IA engineers and his Soldiers play in assisting the combat missions of his fellow Stallion troops in Co. B and C and their ISF counterparts.

"We're brand new to this area and it's all about dominance and the ability to respond quicker," said Burescia. "We didn't have a presence here before and now we have hard tank assets and other capabilities and we're very focused on enemy activity. (For our role) we're opening fields of fire and making a lot of engineering improvements that help with force protection."

"We also know that buried IEDs are a very real threat and we're working to shut-down that threat," he added. "We're very effectively minimizing the enemy's ability to affect what we're doing here."

According to 1st Lt. Daaron Spears, a platoon leader for Sapper Company, the work Sapper Co. is doing with their Iraqi Army counterparts will be very helpful in leading to their transition and he's seen a gradual change towards just that.

"When we first got here, we were doing a 100 percent of the work," said

Spears, who hails from San Antonio, of how things used to be when the Sapper Co. first arrived in country about eight months ago. "Now as time has gone on, they are taking over, and they've been doing most of the work. They have been learning very quickly and providing us input which is something they weren't doing that much before."

"They are getting better everyday and it's their country and they are taking more responsibility and taking pride in the ownership of their country," added Spears.

Sgt. Anthony Santos, a team leader for Sapper Co. who hails from Santa Rita, Guam and Killeen, Texas, said he enjoys working with the IA engineers.

"They're using their own personnel to do the work and their own equipment, we're just here to observe as well as pull security to help them as they work," said Santos. "They're really good engineers and we help each other, and we only step in if they need our help."

"When they got here today, we didn't have to tell them what the job was, what to do or how to do it," added Santos, noting that the IA engineers are no longer relying as much on their support but are becoming more self-reliant. "They just came out here and started working."

(See **ENGINEERS**, page 5)

MND-B assists in Iraqi Police recruiting

By Staff Sgt. Mary Mittlesteadt
7th Mobile Public Affairs
Detachment

BAGHDAD — With Al Qaeda operatives plaguing the western Abu Ghraib neighborhood, local tribal leaders and volunteers have taken a step forward in the political process and fight for security.

Local sheiks, Iraqi Police officials have teamed up with Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers to recruit 1,900 new Iraqi police officers.

“We have 6,000 people who put their names on the list to volunteer,” said Capt. Lawrence Obst, commander of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

The plan for the new officers is to refit three new stations which were undermanned and add two new stations in the area to enhance the security through what is known as the ‘Gateway to Baghdad,’ Obst said.

The process of getting these new recruits into training, and on the streets securing their neighborhoods starts with an identification screening process. This process is being conducted by Soldiers from 2-5 Cavalry and Ministry of Interior workers.

After the selection process, the best applicants are selected to begin training as Iraqi Police officers.

The recruiting comes shortly after the call from local tribal leaders for reconciliation with Coalition



U.S. Army photo by
Staff Sgt. Mary Mittlesteadt,
7th Mobile Public Affairs
Detachment

Volunteers get their recruitment application packets checked by Iraqi Police officers and workers from the Ministry of Interior at the police compound in Baghdad's Abu Ghraib June 28. .

Forces in and the Iraqi government.

“A lot of these people have not been supporting us (the Coalition) over the past four years,” said Obst, who has been working closely with sheiks in the area. “Just now, we have been able to sit down and talk with the local leaders on why we are here. At the same time, they are realizing what a bad influence Al Qaeda has been on the area.”

Hussein Kadhein Zaydan, an Iraqi Police recruit, said many in the area are tired of the violence brought on by Al Qaeda operatives.

“We saw oppression and depression and they killed our women and our children and we want to stop them,” he said through a translator.

Zaydan added that the only solution to confront Al Qaeda is to participate in the political process, become part of the political reconciliation, and to be legitimized as an Iraqi Police officer.

Obst said he’s seen a difference in the neighborhood.

“Attacks have decreased dramatically in my sector,” said Obst, a native of Summit, N.J. “They have helped a lot in securing the area already by providing intelligence and providing security around their own homes.”

Obst said his area of operations had been a hot-bed of violence, with roads littered with improvised explosive devices.

“There was one day in March, where one patrol hit three IEDs in the same day,” he remembered. “In the last month, since we have been working with them, we have had two IEDs in my sector.”

When they first arrived in October 2006, Obst said his company had small arms fire attacks nearly every other day. Now, they have had one small arms fire attack in the past month.

“The markets in Nasir Wa Salam, where I operate, were closed when we got here. Now they are open. People are going about their business and constructing houses and the economy is getting started again,” Obst continued. “There is a huge improvement for both us and the lives of the Iraqis who live there.”

Even with this improvement, Zayden still knows there is much that needs to be done on the part of the Iraqis themselves in the area.

“We cannot seek the help of the Americans forever. One day, they will leave us and we will be on our own,” Zayden said. “The Americans have helped us, but we need to depend on ourselves.”

Zayden said that support for his country will endure long after Coalition Forces depart.

“Until we die,” he said, “we will defend Iraq.”

(From **SHEIKS**, page 1)

village. There will also be areas, or fault lines, where combined Sunni and Shia volunteers will work in places that borders for villages overlap and areas such as on bridges and at traffic control points.

In the longterm, some of the volunteers will actually become policemen and will make up the nucleus of a police station after receiving official government

training, inducting them into the Iraqi security forces, according to Kamper. The reconciliation of the sheiks will open the doors for villages working with the Iraqi government and coalition forces to pursue future projects to improve the quality of life for villagers.

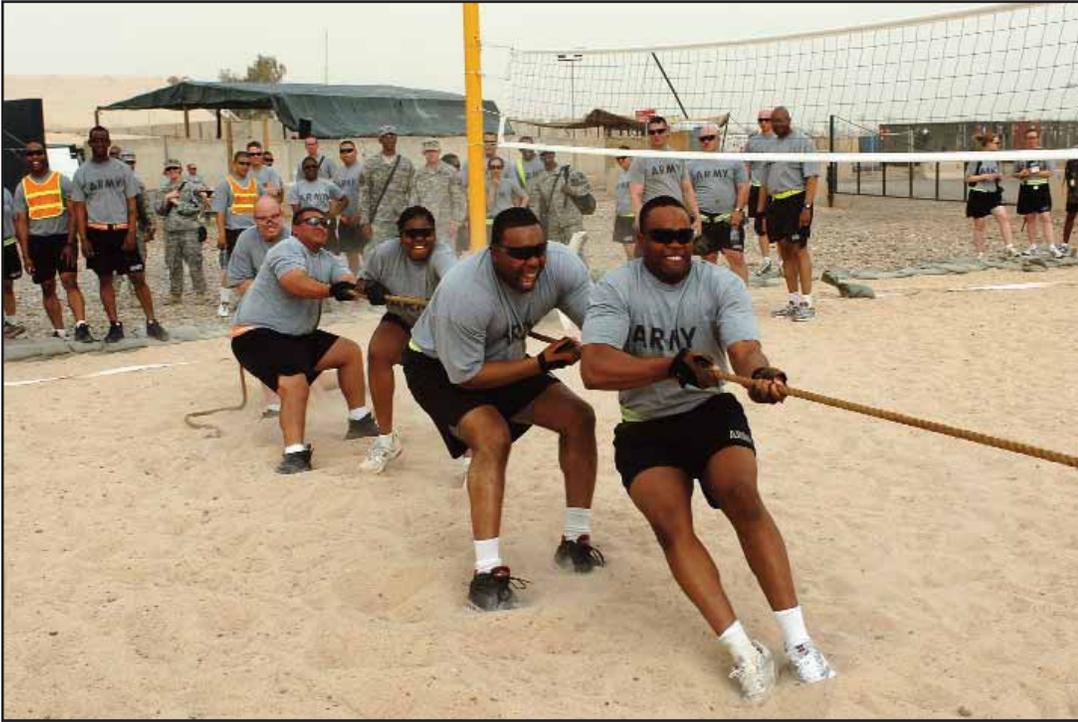
“There has to be a stable security environment or we won’t be able to make any great

progress with service projects,” said Kamper. “(Reconciliation) will build a foundation for working service projects and issues. When the Sunnis and Shia can come together and agree on security and it improves, eventually we will be able to fix water and work other projects and begin making dents in the services gap.”

Kamper said that the meeting was very positive and that he be-

lieves the sheiks will make progress in their process of reconciliation. “Overall, I feel really good about seeing that the two sides are clearly engaged in a dialogue and are committed to working together,” said Kamper. “The key thing is each of the leaders have pledged themselves to support the Iraqi government and to resist Al Qaeda and militias.”

Pulling with all their might



**U.S. Army photo by
Spc. Nathan Hoskins,
1st Air Cavalry Brigade,
Public Affairs Office**

Soldiers from the 615th Aviation Support Battalion "Cold Steel," 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, pull with all their might as other Cold Steel warriors do the same on the other end of the rope in friendly tug-o-war competition during the battalion's sports day July 8 at Camp Taji, Iraq.

ENGINEERS

Continued from page 3

Santos said he hopes his Soldiers have learned some valuable life lessons and experiences from working with the Iraqi engineers.

"We're from two different armies," said Santos. "They can't expect the Iraqi Army to operate the same way that the U.S. Army does. They have to realize that the U.S. way of doing things isn't always the best way, and to open themselves to other ways of doing things. I hope they understand the need to be respectful of cultural differences and be sensitive to other people's ways of operating."

Burrescia praised the Sapper partnership with the IA engineering platoon.

"They're the reason why we've been successful here," said Burrescia. "Their company commander has been very helpful. They have a lot of equipment that we don't have. If we need bucket loaders, they'll be proactive and let us take what we need to get the job done. Whenever they need our help, we're glad to help them as well. It's been a part-



Above: An Iraqi Army engineer from the 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) knocks down an abandoned shack near Al Awad, Iraq July 18 to prevent its use by insurgents as an area from which they could potentially launch attacks on Iraqi and coalition forces.

nership built on mutual respect."

Just over the past week and joined by Soldiers from the 20th Engineer Battalion, Sapper Company and the IA engi-

neers assisted in the discovery and disposal of three improvised explosive devices in the area. They also partnered recently to emplace a bridge for an assault mission.

Falahat returns to normal as kids play in fun day

Dagger Troop brings fun day to children, parents in Falahat

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

*1st Brigade Combat Team,
1st Cavalry Division
Public Affairs Office*

Falahat, Iraq – The sounds of laughing girls and boys could be heard as Soldiers from Troop D, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment brought the children here a day of fun through painting as well as other activities July 7.

The Soldiers handed out paint brushes and paint and watched as the children painted pictures and their names on concrete barriers. They also played with the children, kicking soccer balls to them. When the painting was done, the troops gave the children toys and candy.

In addition to the children, the Trp. D Soldiers continued building relationships with parents and other adults in the village—a place that was once plagued by daily violence.

Things in the village have changed, thanks to area sheiks gathering together with their people and the local government to end sectarian violence and promote reconciliation in this town which just a month ago was shaken by constant improvised explosive device attacks and gunfire, according to Capt. Martin Wohlgemuth, commander, Trp. D and a native of Anchorage, Ala.

Now, mainly quiet, thanks in part to a neighborhood watch--made up of local concerned citizens--that informs on insurgents, reports terrorist acts and notifies Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces if caches are found, the village is beginning to come back to life, said Wohlgemuth, and the fun day was a good sign that soon the focus on security can move more towards reconstruction efforts and projects.

“This has been something we’ve been hoping to do since we got here, turning from more of a security operations role to helping the people which is great news,” said Wohlgemuth. “Today, we are giving the chil-



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

Soldiers from Troop D, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, greet local villagers in Falahat, Iraq July 7 during a “fun day” for the village’s children sponsored by Trp. D.

dren and their parents a day that they can enjoy together that allows for them a time to have fun and some normalcy in their lives.”

“It also allows us the chance to get out on the street to get to know the locals better and talk to each other,” Wohlgemuth added.

Interacting with children in a setting that was once wrought with violence has been an interesting experience, said Trp. D Soldiers who have been performing cordon and searches and other major operations in the area for the past seven months.

“This is unique, and it’s really quite different than when we first started coming down here,” said Spc. Matthew Dixon, a forward observer with Trp. D who hails from Pottstown, Pa. “You can definitely see a change in the neighborhood—adult males are not afraid to come out of their houses and you see kids playing outside. It’s becoming like any typical neighborhood again.”

“I feel really good about it, because you can actually see the results, before it didn’t feel like anything was happening and there was no proof that anything would ever change,” added Dixon. “Now you actually see people waving and smiling at you.”

Soldiers explained what it means to have villagers here taking on their own fight against the insurgency.

“They’re taking ownership in taking back the streets here,” said 1st Lt. Mike Blake, a platoon leader in Trp. D and a native of Baltimore, Md., whose troops work out of an outpost in the village.

“It’s not much different than what happens in the states when gangs try to come into an area and take over, the people get fed up with it and fight them—that’s exactly what the people here are doing against the insurgents,” said Staff Sgt. Danny Garner, a Trp. D squad leader, who claims Cherokee, Ala. and Longbeach, Calif. as his hometowns. “It was not something we came up with, but it was the people who came to us and said they were fed up with the violence. I remember seeing a brother of a man who was killed by insurgents crying and saying that he was ready to fight the insurgents right now.

In recent weeks, locals working in Falahat’s neighborhood watch program have led Trp. D Soldiers to several weapons caches and improvised explosive device materials. They have also reported on insurgents lurking in their neighborhoods.

“The people here are the ones who knew who the foreign fighters were in their neighborhoods and they have helped rid the area

(See, **FALAHAT**, page 7)



Col. Paul E. Funk II, commander, 1st "IRONHORSE" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division addresses six members of Congress, who represent districts in Iowa, Ohio, Tennessee and Texas, on Camp Taji, Iraq July 22 during a special presentation for the distinguished visitors that was held in Taji's Ministry Center. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp)

FALAHAT

Continued from Page 6

of those foreign fighters," said Blake.

"This has been a great step forward, seeing this community stand up, and this is truly a blessing," injected Garner.

Also at the request of the villagers, Trp. D Soldiers set up a newly established outpost in the village to assist with security when necessary.

One of the next steps to getting the village back to normalcy will be working short term projects in conjunction with the local Iraqi government to get the people back to work.

"We will be working with them on projects that will pay them and employ them," said Wohlgemuth. "Some of the projects will be similar to the Conservation Corps back in the 1920s and 1930s in which people were hired to clean canals and pick up garbage." In addition, said Wohlgemuth, the village will soon be moving ahead with some projects to refurbish schools, fix water mains and electrical lines—things that, until now, could not be given a green light due to security concerns.



Pfc. Charles McVey, a tanker with Troop D, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, who hails from Lakeland, Fla., opens a can of paint in Falahat, Iraq July 7 during a "fun day" for the children of the village which was sponsored by Trp. D. In the event, the children painted their names and small pictures on concrete barriers. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp)

Messages from the Homefront

To: SSG James Velesky
 Days are continuing to pass as nights fall, some pass roughly while others you blink and they are gone without you really knowing. But whatever these days may be i hope that we can continue to find strength, courage, determination and faith, in our friends, family, God and more so in eachother. You said it wouldn't be easy ,but we are doing it together! Here's to one year of marriage and the rest of our lives to go! Happy Anniversary honey! I love you and I'm waiting!
 All My Love Forever and Always,
 Your Babydoll

To: Enrique Avalos Jr
 Happy 10th Anniversary! I am looking forward to many more anniversaries with you. You are my best friend and I have loved every minute of our marriage. I Thank the Lord everyday for blessing me with your love. I know we promised to renew our vows on this day, but we will when you return. Remember I want to grow old with you!
 Your loving and always appreciative wife,
 Sandra

To: CPL David J. Weckwerth (4/9, A Co) and all the U.S. Soldiers at Taji,
 All your family and friends back home are proud of your contributions during Operation Iraqi Freedom. You stand between what is good and bad every day and we want you to know that your service is commendable. We look forward to your safe return. To all the 4/9 Manchu's, "Keep up the Fire!"
 Bill, Lavonne, William and Weston

To my Cubby Bear,
 I'm spending all your money and the kids have destroyed your DVDs. Kidding. Can't wait to see you again. We miss you everyday.
 Love, Cathy Bear

Ministry Center/Tigris River Chapel Weekly Events Schedule

WEEKLY EVENTS			
<u>EVERY Sunday:</u>	0830 Hrs	Sunday School	
Ministry Center	0830 Hrs	New Believers	
	1000 Hrs	Worship Service	
<u>1st & 3rd Monday:</u>	1900 Hrs	Leadership	
Tigris River Chapel		Training	
<u>2nd & 4th Monday:</u>	1900 Hrs	POWER	
Tigris River Chapel		Prayer	
<u>1st Tuesday:</u>	1900 Hrs	Marital	
Tigris River Chapel		Enrichment	
<u>2nd Tuesday:</u>	1900 Hrs	Women's	
Tigris River Chapel		Fellowship	
<u>3rd Tuesday:</u>	1900 Hrs	Singles'	
Tigris River Chapel		Fellowship	
<u>4th Tuesday:</u>	1900 Hrs	Men's	
Tigris River Chapel		Fellowship	
<u>EVERY Wednesday:</u>	1900 Hrs	Bible Study	
Ministry Center			
<u>EVERY Thursday</u>	1900 Hrs	Choir Rehearsal	
<u>*** & Saturday:</u>			
Ministry Center			
<u>EVERY Friday:</u>	1900 Hrs	Open Circle (RM 31)	
Ministry Center			
Ministry Center	1900 Hrs	Joy Nite!	

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 Pastoral Lay Minister
 (WO1) CURTIS JOHNSON
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Healthy steps toward re-deployment

By Staff Sgt. Mary Middlestead
15th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs
13th SC (E), LSA Anaconda PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – After a long year in Iraq filled with stressful and physically demanding moments, the word ‘re-deployment’ is like sweet music in a Soldiers ears. Although, excitement is high and boarding the flight home may be the focus for some, all must complete a mandatory re-deployment medical threat brief and health assessment prior to leaving theater.

“The goal of the brief and assessment for Soldiers is to screen for problems that may have been developed during the deployment and problems that may develop after returning home,” said Maj. Bonnie Hartstein, brigade surgeon, 15th Sustainment Brigade from Fort Hood, Texas.

The re-deployment medical threat brief gives Soldiers knowledge of documented health concerns and threats from the region they are stationed in and informs them of the possible joys and stresses of reintegration with family and friends.

“It lets Soldiers know what they need to know about their health prior to re-deploying,” she said. After the brief, Soldiers will have the opportunity

to fill out the Post-Deployment Health Assessment form and complete a one-on-one with a medical care provider.

“During the one-on-one we annotate what we feel the Soldier needs, so when they return they can get care,” Hartstein, a native of Rockfield, Md., said. She added that the assessment is also intended to track trends and large scale problems so they can be addressed in the future.

For all Soldiers, this brief and assessment has to be completed within 30 days prior to leaving theater. Soldiers can expect to learn about common health problems, such as upper respiratory infections primarily associated with the environment and bowel disturbances caused by change of diet and eating habits.

The brief also covers infectious diseases like leishmaniasis, tuberculosis, malaria and sexually transmitted diseases.

To prepare for the health assessment and help this process run smoothly and quickly, Hartstein suggested Soldiers should “anticipate the questions that will be asked and be ready to answer them.”

A few of the topics covered are health changes during the deployment, sick call visits, medications taken during the deployment, vaccination history, combat related incidents and emotion

wellbeing.

The information Soldiers put on the PDHA form is protected medical information, not punitive, and will be put in their medical record.

“There is no reason not to be honest. It is to help individual Soldiers,” she said.

For example “some people worry about dust and environmental exposures and shouldn’t be afraid to voice those concerns,” Hartstein said. However, she added the assessment is not for addressing short-term issues that should be handled by going through a local troop medical clinic for sick call.

For National Guard and Reserve component Soldiers, completing this assessment properly is equally important, said Hartstein. Medical issues documented on the PDHA are used to ensure accurate referrals when they return to their demobilization site or home station.

She recommends Soldiers keep the PDHA form available and not to pack it in their luggage, because they will need it to depart theater.

Completion of these re-deployment steps will take Soldiers that much closer to their family and friends and give tools and knowledge to use for their health and successful reintegration home.



113th Medical Company Combat Stress Control

“Never Leave A Fallen Comrade”

We are currently offering classes and groups everyday!!!
No appointments are necessary!!! All classes take place at 10 a.m.
and 3 p.m. on days listed below.

Mornings: 10 to 11 a.m. Afternoons: 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.



Classes

Monday (Morning Only): Anger Management
Tuesday (Morning Only): Stress Management
Wednesday (Morning Only): Coping Skills
Thursday: Conflict Resolution
Fridays (Morning Only): Relaxation Techniques

Monday (Afternoon Only): Relationships
Tuesday (Afternoon Only): Money Management
Wednesday (Afternoon Only): PTSD Group
Thursday (Afternoon Only): Drug/Alcohol Group
Friday (Afternoon Only): Smoking Cessation

Directions: 113th CSC is located at the corner of Sooner Ave. and 37th. Directly east of the light tower.

113th MEDICAL COMPANY Combat Stress Control, Building 632 Sooner Avenue DSN: 318-834-1050
VOIP: 302-242-6950 (OIC) LTC: daniel.e.lonnquist@us.army.mil (NCOIC) SFC: ibrahim.s.kabbah@us.army.mil

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Getting over the hump

By Chaplain (Capt.) David Johnston

1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Chaplain

While running, it is a great feeling reaching the half way point because you know that all of your efforts now are carrying towards your destination, towards the finish line. However, the half-way point is also a difficult on a long run because after all that you have done you are only half way there. You know that you are heading towards the finish line but it is still no where in sight. That is where many of us find ourselves in this deployment. Everyone has been working hard for quite sometime now and there is still quite as ways left to run. The question is how do we finish strong?

First, pace is everything. If you begin a marathon at the same pace you would a 100 meter sprint then burnout is eminent. Now is a great time to look at how you are holding up under the stressful conditions you are placed in everyday. Are you getting enough rest? Making time, however little it may be, to take care of yourself? Are you fulfilling the personal and professional goals you set before you came over here? Now is the time to look at those things and adjust fire if necessary.

Secondly, keep a log of all of your successes since you have been here. Throughout the Old Testament when God would do significant things in the lives of his people they would build an altar. Every time they, or others, passed by that altar they would be reminded of something great God did. We all have those moments when we feel overwhelmed, when we feel that nothing is going our way, that we just can't seem to get a break. When we have those moments we need to be able to look back over our accomplishments, whether they happened in the field

or on the home front, and encourage ourselves that this too shall pass, that we are making a difference over here, that things won't always be the way they are—they will get better.

In the book of Hebrews the author compares life to a race and encourages those who are running it to "let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles us." A runner wouldn't wear any additional clothing than necessary in a race or tether themselves to some heavy object; rather, they get rid of everything that is not essential to helping them win. Many times in we can add a lot of unnecessary things in our lives, that that slow us down, that pull our focus away from the finish line. These things can be a poor attitude, a bad habit, harboring anger towards someone, and the list could go on and on. Spend some time thinking about those things that really hold you back, those things that weigh you down as you run and ask yourself, "What needs to change here?"

Finally, think about how you want to finish this race. What state do you want to be in when you go home? What do you want to accomplish over here professionally and personally? List those things and ask yourself, "What do I need to do to get there?" What attitude do I need to embrace to carry me through to the end? What things do I need to put in place to help run this race? We need to constantly keep the finish line before our eyes and if we do, then we will finish strong. We will look back over all that we have done and have something to be proud of. We will look back and be satisfied knowing that we gave it our all, that we ran well and finished strong.

CAMP TAJI RELIGIOUS SERVICES SCHEDULE

Rawhide Chapel (Bldg. 639)

POC: SPC Leathermon 834-1049

Sunday
10 a.m. Protestant

Wagonmaster Chapel (Bldg. 97)

POC: SGT Kimp 834-1124/1161

Saturday
1 p.m. Catholic Mass

Sunday
10 a.m. Church of Christ
10 a.m. Contemporary Protestant (Theater)

Tuesday/Thursday
7 p.m. Choir Practice

Friday
6 p.m. Communion Service

Saturday
7 p.m. Catholic Mass

Special Forces Chapel
POC: CH (CPT) Black 246-1032

Sunday
2 p.m. Protestant

Saturday
4 p.m. Catholic Mass

Warrior Chapel (Bldg. 510)

POC: SSG Drain 242-6501

Sunday
10 a.m. Traditional Protestant
2 p.m. LDS Service
6:30 p.m. Contemporary Protestant

Saturday
10 a.m. Catholic Mass

Tigris River Chapel
POC: SSG Drain 242-6501

Sunday
9:30 a.m. Traditional Protestant
11:00 a.m. Contemporary Protestant
2:00 p.m. Spanish Protestant

Friday
12:00 p.m. Islamic Prayer (Jumma)
1:00 p.m. Islamic Q & A Service
7:00 p.m. Jewish Service

Saturday
10:30 a.m. SDA Service
8:00 p.m. Catholic Mass

For Gospel Services/Weekly Activities at the Ministry Center and Tigris River Chapel, please see Page 4 of the Taji Times.

SMA visits outpost

Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston speaks to the paratroopers of 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, during a visit to Coalition Outpost Callahan in the Shaab neighborhood of Baghdad's Adhamiyah District July 16. Preston met with paratroopers and answered some of their questions while touring the facility. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



Protect the Soldiers protecting you.

OPSEC
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TAJI BUS LINES WITH STOPS

South A

- PX/Mayor's Cell/Freedom Phone
- Pool
- Finance/Post Office/Wrangler Clinic
- Theaters/DFAC2
- Combat Stress
- Blacknight Laundry
- Wolfpack Motorpool

South B

- PX/Mayor's Cell/Freedom Phone
- DFAC 1
- PAX Terminal
- DFAC2/Theater
- ECP 9
- Optometry
- Finance/Post Office/Wrangler Clinic
- Black Night Laundry

Tomahawk Express

- PX/Mayor's Cell/Freedom Phone
- DFAC 1
- PAD 1
- CSC AYRD
- Tomahawk Village
- Gym 129
- PAX Terminal

North A

- PX/Mayor's Cell/Freedom Phone
- DFAC 1
- 61st Blue Devil
- Bldg. 680 MWR
- Bldg. 582 MWR/Gym

Extension means extending cash cards too

Time ticking away on cash card expiration dates

By Spc. Jeffrey Ledesma

1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – As time slowly ticks away minutes to the end of deployments, another ticking clock draws near expiration.

For many deployed Soldiers affected by the recent extension, their Eagle Cash Card, the credit card-looking debit card issued through Army finance offices, will expire at the one-year mark. However, Soldiers can update their card's expiration date with a quick trip to their local finance office.

“Soldiers can update the card when they do other business in finance,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Barbara Pettit, the senior noncommissioned officer for the 15th Finance Battalion headquartered at Camp Liberty. She recently updated her own card, which she said, “...only took a couple of seconds.”

The Appomattox, Va., native added that she is also considering setting up locations Soldiers frequent in upcoming months to better capture as many Soldiers as possible to keep their cards active.

With up to three months added onto Soldiers' already year-long deployments, many troops should consider the benefits of the no-transaction-fee card during the remainder of their deployment, Pettit said.

“Three months left in Iraq is a long time for any Soldier,” she said. “The card can be used until the end of the deployment.”

Pettit said the ECC has many advantages over a handful of cash and regular credit or debit cards.

“Soldiers can upload \$350 per day to the card, so they actually have more money available for use with the card than if they got cash from finance,” she said. “Also, if the card is lost or de-



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Nicole Kojetin, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

Spc. William Morgan, an honor guard member from Deltona, Fla., deployed with the Multi-National Division – Baghdad and 1st Cavalry Division, uses the Eagle Cash Card machine in the division's headquarters July 23.

stroyed, the amount on the card is still available to the Soldier.

“With cash, it is lost.”

Any of the estimated 60,000 ECC users coming close to redeploying can easily get their remaining balance transferred back into their bank accounts at any of the ECC kiosks. The kiosks are located in several different coun-

tries – Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan and Qatar – with more than 100 in the Multi-National Corps – Iraq footprint, alone.

“If Soldiers do not redeposit the money back into bank accounts the money will automatically return to the bank once the card expires,” Pettit said. “It is a simple process.”



**U.S. Army photo by
Spc. Nathan Hoskins,
1st Air Cavalry Brigade
Public Affairs Office**

Spc. Eliseo Rovira, a fueler for Forward Support Company E, 3rd "Spearhead" Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, stands next to a fuel truck at Taji, Iraq. Rovira and his comrades helped the distribution platoon reach the goal of one million gallons of pumped fuel.

One million...and still counting!

*1st ACB fuelers reach
aviation milestone*

By Spc. Nathan Hoskins
*1st Air Cavalry Brigade,
1st Cavalry Division
Public Affairs Office*

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – It seems that the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, fuelers never sleep as yet another distribution platoon hits the high mark of one million gallons of aircraft fuel pumped.

The troopers of Forward Support Company E, 3rd "Spearhead" Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div., a UH-60 Black Hawk unit, have been in Iraq for ten months, but have already pumped what amounts to about two years worth of fuel if they were in the U.S., said New Windsor, Ill., native Staff Sgt. Johnnie Shull, the distribution platoon sergeant for Co. E.

Eunice, La., native 1st Lt. Jacob Bollich, the distribution platoon leader for Co. E, said the intensive training is what got them so far so soon.

"A long hard month at (the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif.,) got us this far," he said. "When we got back from NTC, we packed our equipment, took

block leave, came back (to Fort Hood, Texas) and then, a month later, we were in Iraq."

And that's another facet about the forward support company; the unit was activated just before going to NTC. They had very little time on the job before heading for Iraq, said Perryton, Texas, native 1st Lt. Luke Reynard, former distribution platoon leader.

"Our battalion was only activated in March 2006 and here we are in July 2007 and we've already pulled off ten months of a combat tour and pumped a million gallons of fuel," said Reynard.

While other distribution companies are at twice Co. E's numbers, they fuel other company's aircraft or multiple types, said Bollich.

"The significance for our million gallons is that we only fuel Black Hawks in our battalion – sticking only to cold fuel, so it takes a lot more time to reach (the million gallon mark)," said the current platoon leader.

Although they have reached a significant goal, they are quick to add that they couldn't have done it without their comrades in the maintenance area.

"Our maintenance team has done a lot of major work to keep the fuel trucks run-

ning. When they initially arrived, they had to fabricate parts to ensure missions would keep going," said Bollich.

This team effort keeps the fleet of trucks running and directly affects missions throughout Baghdad – like a network – all components operating in sync because of the other parts, he said.

"It's a big network: maintenance keeps the fuel trucks running, the fuelers keep the birds in the air and the birds get the Soldiers to their missions," he said.

Reynard puts it a little more humorously.

"Without fuel, pilots are pedestrians," he said with a grin.

All joking aside, the Soldiers of the distribution platoon know that their job can be monotonous, but it is a vital part to the overall mission, said Bollich.

On top of hitting the million gallon mark, the fuelers, along with their comrades in Co. E, are responsible for water distribution throughout their entire battalion, keeping the helo's flares stocked, and providing half the battalion's required personnel for force protection, Bollich said.

If that wasn't enough, the distribution platoon is responsible for setting up an ad-hoc, two-pump forward arming and refueling point if the main one goes down for any



U.S. Army photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Fullerton, Calif., native Capt. Paul Morton, the commander of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, speaks with local elders of Jazira, a village within the Shaab neighborhood of Baghdad's Adhamiyah district July 19.

Respecting the elders: Falcons seek knowledge from residents

By Spc. L.B. Edgar

7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD – The three men stood out from the other Iraqis. They were wrapped in elegant robes with the traditional headdress and hallowed beads in their hands. Noting their status, the paratroopers respectfully requested permission to speak with them.

These were not the everyday citizens of Jazira, an area within the Shaab neighborhood of Baghdad's Adhamiyah district. The men's dress and demeanor connote their status in the community as village elders, said Capt. Paul Morton, the commander of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 325th Infantry Regiment.

Morton approached the men as a friend July 19 and cordially greeted each with a handshake, followed by a traditional hand over his heart.

Residents of Jazira revere the older Iraqi's not only for their age, but their completion of a pilgrimage to the Islamic holy lands of Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia, said 1st Sgt. Joseph Singerhouse, the company's first ser-

geant.

"The headdresses don't signify that they're an elder. The headdresses signify they've made the Hajj (pilgrimage)," said the native of Fayetteville, N.C.

The men were also wearing black shawls over their white robes as a sign of mourning for the death of a loved one, Singerhouse explained.

Morton stopped the Jazira elders to draw on their knowledge of the community. They have a broader perspective than many residents because they lived through Saddam Hussein's reign, the first Gulf War and all of Operation Iraqi Freedom, said the native of Fullerton, Calif.

"I asked them what kind of changes they've seen," Morton said.

The elders responded with questions of why the homes of seemingly "good people" were searched from time to time.

Morton explained many criminal-militia members as well as an extra-judicial-killing cell, an extremist group which practices ethnic cleansing, were captured in the vicinity of seemingly

"good people." The searches were a necessity to ensure security in Jazira, he said.

Shaab is primarily Shia but has some pockets of Sunni, who were at one point, targeted by extra-judicial-killing cells, he said.

However, for the most part the residents "live together pretty well," Morton said. "We are making a difference up there. And yes, we are hitting people's houses," he said.

The people have always had mixed feelings about the presence of Coalition Forces in Shaab, Morton said.

However, the respect shown by paratroopers during a raid does not go unnoticed. Residents often shape their opinion of Coalition Forces on brief encounters and their last impression is often the most important. The residents share such opinions with them, who then inform Morton how residents view Coalition Forces, he said.

"When we first got here they were very impressed with how respectful the 82nd was in general to the people,"

(See RESPECT ELDERS, page 19)

1st BCT hero tells story, praises troops

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

TAJI, Iraq – When the 1st “IRON-HORSE” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division’s Staff Sgt. Matthew Schilling, a squad leader for Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, thinks back to the mission that earned him a Bronze Star Medal with “V” device for valor, the images in his mind are crystal clear.

Schilling, a scout, who hails from Houston, Mo., remembers nearly every detail of what happened during the hour-long ambush at Falahat, Iraq Feb. 16 in vivid color and relates them as though what he did was ‘no big deal,’ he says, instead preferring to give the glory to his Soldiers and his platoon leader who also lived through the experience.

The mission began simply enough, said Schilling.

His platoon was to go with the Iraqi Police on patrol boats to do patrols on a river near Falahat to keep the waterways clear of possible insurgents trafficking weapons. Tips received indicated that insurgents were using the river to transport weapons and gain access to areas from which they could launch attacks on civilians, Iraqi security forces and coalition troops. The plan also included stopping and checking houses near the banks in a search for weapons and suspected insurgents.

Four boats were on the patrol with Schilling’s being the lead boat.

For the mission, Schilling was joined by four Iraqi Police officers, his platoon leader, 1st Lt. John Dolan of Maple Grove, Minn., and two of his Soldiers—Mulberry, Ind., native Spc. Aaron Allmandinger and Prescott, Ariz., native Spc. Dusty Chitwood—along with their medic, Milwaukee native Spc. Dan Koeber.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs Office

Staff Sgt. Matthew Schilling (right), a squad leader with Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment and 1st Lt. John Dolan, a platoon leader for Troop C., talk to a local Iraqi man near Taji, Iraq July 3. Schilling recently received the Bronze Star Medal with “V” device for valorous actions taken during an enemy ambush near Falahat, Iraq Feb. 16.

Having gone only two kilometers down the river, Schilling’s boat and the other patrol boats were soon hit by machine gun fire from a very large, well-organized enemy ambush involving nearly 100 insurgent fighters, he said.

“We were coming down the river during the day, and whoever saw us had set up a nice long ambush with machine guns on both ends and a lot of people with weapons in between,” said Schilling. “Once they started shooting, we returned fire but could not sustain it because there was too much heavy machine gun fire.

The insurgent forces fired at the boats from houses and roof tops on one of the banks of the river.

“As soon as our lieutenant gave the order to turn the boat around, he was shot in the arm and the IP driving the boat was shot in the stomach—when he went down he yanked the boat wheel and we sailed off into an island and crashed,” added Schilling.

As enemy rounds peppered the boat pieces of shrapnel flew up hitting Schilling in the mouth and flying at others in the boat as well. Another Iraqi Police officer was also wounded in the ensuing gunfire.

“I was spitting out chunks of aluminum which came from the boat,” said Schilling.

“Our boat sounded like a metal shed when it’s raining,” added Dolan.

The other boats in the patrol had not seen Schilling’s crew crash and were also under fire and trying to push up the river.

“In reflection, some guys were mad that no one came immediately after us, but they were also reacting to the situation,” said Schilling. “Things may have been worse if another one of the boats had come back. We may have had some of our guys killed or another boat destroyed.”

Making it onto the banks of the
(See **BRIGADE HERO**, page 17)

2-8, Iraqi Army bring medical care to Hor Al Bosh

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

1st Brigade Combat Team,
1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

HOR AL BOSH, Iraq – Troops from the 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) led a combined operation in with Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment to bring medical care to the people living here July 15.

During the event, more than 400 local citizens were treated for mainly minor ailments at a local school. Iraqi Army medics, an Iraqi Army doctor from the 4th Brigade, 9th IA Div. (Mech.), several medics and physician's assistants from both 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt. and Charlie Medical Company, 115th Brigade Support Battalion treated everything from patients with minor burns to colds, ear infections, headaches and cuts.

Occasionally patients arrived with major injuries or ailments such as major heart conditions as well as child who had a severe form of spina bifida, a genetic neurological disorder.

“What we’re doing here is basically like a sick call for local nationals and for anything beyond those capabilities there’s a system by which we can refer them to hospitals,” said Maj. James Rice, physicians assistant for the 2-8 Cavalry, who hails from San Antonio, explaining that there is a program for treatment sponsored by the Iraqi Ministry of Health. “(For major illnesses) they can fill out an information sheet through which they are enrolled in a consultation program, referring them to a larger hospital in Iraq or outside Iraq in a neighboring country.

“Obviously there’s an overall contribution to our mission by doing things like (the joint medical effort) to help build relations with local nationals and it lets them know that we’re not about violence, but rather about helping people,” said Rice.

“One of the most important things that we’ve been doing has been working closely with the IA medics and the IA doctor here, and this is an important step towards handing over this mission to them so they can transition-- and the only way for that to happen is for them to take the lead, and get out here and do these types of things.”

After the patients had been seen and picked up their medication they were taken to a room where Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers gave them gifts such as blankets and toys and candy for their children.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

Pfc. Brad Nungester from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, who hails from Lima, Ohio, and an Iraqi Army soldier (center) from the 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) prepare to let in more patients a school, acting as a one-day clinic, in Hor Al Bosh July 15 during an Iraqi-led joint healthcare operation.

“I love helping the people, especially the children, more than anything,” said Spc. Samuel Lochabay, a medic with Headquarters Company, 2-8 Cav., who hails from Conroe, Texas.

“Helping kids is great, since I have four of my own. So I really don’t mind doing this, because the majority of people we see are children,” said Sgt. Mark Avila, medic, HHC, 2-8 Cavalry, and a native of Las Vegas. “It’s nice to see how much the people here appreciate what we’re doing to help them. An 80-year old Iraqi woman gave me a hug and thanked me. It really lets you see how much our sacrifices really mean.”

Working with Iraqi Army medical personnel has also been an experience that the U.S. Soldiers said they have enjoyed.

“They’re really a lot of fun to work with, we’ve built a lot of camaraderie with them, joking with them and they’re coming along really well,” said Lochabay. “They’re a lot better trained than when we first began working with them, and soon they’ll be able to take over for themselves. They’re also showing a lot of enthusiasm for their jobs.”

“It’s been really good getting the experience of doing this with the IA medics,” said Avila. “(Having) the Iraqi people actually seeing their own people take the lead in providing health care is another positive step forward for the Iraqi Army.”

As Iraqi Army and U.S. Soldiers worked to help heal physical ailments, Capt. Scott Hequembourg, commander, Company A, 2-8 Cavalry, said his Soldiers and the IA troops who patrol together in Hor Al Bosh every day have also been working to help heal societal rifts caused by sectarian violence by helping to take terrorists off the streets and building relationships with villagers.

Hequembourg’s troops and their IA counterparts aided medical personnel with the joint medical effort.

“Some of the positives here are that the locals have become a lot more friendly to us and we’ve been working with the people here to get shops opened back up again,” said Hequembourg, who hails from Jefferson City, Mo. “We’re also working several projects to improve situations with power and water.”

These humanitarian efforts don’t just help the Iraqis, the company commander added.

“For our Soldiers, it gives them the opportunity to see the human side of Iraqis—that not all the people here are bad or are insurgents,” said Hequembourg. They’re seeing more and more that there are mainly good people here who just need help to get their country back on its feet. The Soldiers understand that what they’re accomplishing here really is helping the people.”

BRIGADE HERO (Continued from Page 15)

island, Schilling organized his troops and assisted the IPs, sending them into the reeds of the island for cover and helped his Soldiers set up a defensive perimeter, while continuously under fire.

Schilling returned to the boat by himself so that he could gather up extra weapons, ammo and other needed gear, running back and forth from the boat to where his Soldiers were.

Once he had all the supplies out of the boat, Schilling then threw a grenade into the boat to damage it and keep it out of insurgent hands as well as to create a distraction.

"While we moved into the reeds, we weren't receiving as much fire and as we kept moving, they (the enemy forces) were focusing more on the boat burning," Schilling said.

Eventually, while still under fire, they found a clearing, setting up a better fighting position and treating their wounded. The area also served as a place to wait for evacuation helicopters.

While they waited, Schilling, Allmandinger and Chitwood continued fighting as Koeber treated the wounded and Dolan called in for aviation assets from the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division based on Camp Taji.

"Communications were a little sketchy," said Schilling. "The lieutenant had lost a lot of blood and about all he could do was call in to get us some air evacuation and medical evacuation helicopters."

It was at this time that the enemy began sweeping the area.

"I was becoming dizzy from blood loss and my sleeves were just soaked in blood and my arm was turning purple," said Dolan, who in addition to his wounded arm received a softball-sized bruise to his ribs from a bullet hitting the plating on his vest armor. "We thought we were going to get over run. We were 100 percent sure that we were going to die. That's why no one freaked out, we just said 'let's do our job and take these guys out.'"

Once the helicopters were in sight, Schilling signaled them.

"The enemy shifted their fire back to us, and that's when all hell broke loose," said Schilling, whose cheek was grazed by a bullet while at the same time his rifle sling was shot off and his pants were sporting a couple of fresh bullet holes, fortunately not accompanied by wounds. "Soon though, the helicopters were on their way and it was good for us because we were running low on ammo. Once the birds arrived, the enemy fled."

Once the wounded were evacuated, Schilling, his Soldiers and the two remaining IPs left the area on air evacuation helicopters.

Schilling said he now takes the incident in stride and never really intended to ever be called a hero.

"I was just doing what I was supposed to do," he said. "All of our guys were doing what they were supposed to do and they're a great bunch of guys. It only took a little bit of orchestration."

"The lieutenant and I joke about it, but I felt like I was really jacked up at the time, but it didn't seem like that big of a deal," added Schilling. "Luckily, we took extra ammo with us that day, and I really believe that someone was watching over us."

Dolan said he was pleased with his Soldiers and the way that Schilling took charge during the mission.

"I'm very proud of my men, how they handled everything—all of them reacted courageously," said Dolan. "Staff Sgt. Schilling receiving the Bronze Star with V was well-deserved and I have no problem calling him a hero."

"He's really one of the most humble guys I've ever met who never wants any attention for himself—he gives all the credit to his Soldiers," added Dolan.

Allmandinger said not only is his squad leader a great noncommissioned officer but he played a vital role in keeping the troops alive.

"He took charge and risked hostile fire and kept us all together," said Allmandinger. "If he hadn't been there, things definitely would have been a lot worse."

In all, according to Schilling, 22 enemy fighters were killed in the engagement while more than 50 insurgents were wounded. Schilling also said that the Iraqi Police officer shot in the stomach while driving the patrol boat later died of complications from his wounds. No other Iraqi security force personnel or U.S. Soldiers were killed in the ambush.



Left: Round-up, Mont., native Col. Paul E. Funk II (left), commander, 1st "IRONHORSE" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, pins the Bronze Star Medal with "V" device for valor to the uniform of Staff Sgt. Matthew Schilling, a scout for Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, who hails from Houston, Mo. at Camp Taji, Iraq June 18. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Raymond Kokel, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)



**U.S. Army photo by
Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th
Mobile Public Affairs
Detachment**

*Great Falls, Va., native
2nd Lt. Andrew Walko, a
platoon leader with
Company C, 2nd
Battalion, 325th
Airborne Infantry
Regiment, 2nd Brigade
Combat Team, 82nd
Airborne Division,
provides security as
paratroopers question
residents of Ur, a
neighborhood in
Baghdad's Adhamiyah
District, July 21.*

15th SB retention keeps troops in boots

*Sustainment Brigade's career
counselor's work to help
Soldiers achieve career goals*

By Spc. Karly Cooper
*15th Sustainment Brigade,
Public Affairs Office*

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – By the time a Soldier arrives at a unit, decisions need to be made and opportunities start knocking on life's door – this is where retention begins.

On Camp Taji, the 15th Sustainment Brigade career counselor works day after day helping as many Soldiers as he can throughout their strenuous deployment by giving them the guidance they are seeking for their careers.

Sgt. 1st Class Brian E. Helgren has the tools for inquiring Soldiers who come to him to see just what re-enlisting in the Army will do for them, whether for career enhancement, educational advantages or other motivations.

After being in the military himself for 22 years, Helgren knows and understands the changes and decisions that need to be made when it comes to one's future.

"Soldiers have many reasons for re-enlisting, some for personal reasons, some

for money, some for family tradition, some joined right out of high school and the Army is all they ever wanted," Said Helgren.

Over 750 contracts have been confirmed since the beginning of the deployment, and \$9 million in bonuses have been awarded.

The reenlistment chart numbers rose in April, making it the peak month for Soldiers re-enlisting in Active duty. National Guard and Reserves had a two-month tie break making October 2006 and January 2007 the peak months of reenlisting for the brigade.

"It's a team effort, the command and retention hierarchy, if the unit has a strong program with strong-trained, aggressive personnel that takes care of the Soldier, the rest is up to the Soldier to decide to reenlist," he said.

Educating the Soldiers on all the updates to the program is the real challenge, but the Web site www.armyreenlistment.com can assist until they can visit their career counselor.

"Soldiers are eligible one bonus per zone which is tax free in certain designated locations," Helgren said.

Bonus's are broke down into three zones. The Alpha, the Bravo and Charlie zone.

National Guard and Reserve Soldiers



**Above: Career counselors from the
15th Sustainment Brigade work to
keep troops in boots.**

contracting can take full advantage of education benefits and possible active guard/reserve technician jobs at their hometowns.

With all the bonus's that the Army offers across the board on the Active Duty realm, the GI Bill, military housing and full medical benefits many Soldiers find it quite daunting when ETS comes sneaking up on them.

Service members and spouses can both now access education benefits as a incentive, which in turn don't make such a hard hit on the check book as it would coming straight out of pocket.

"Bottom line is most Soldiers love just serving their country and being in the Army therefore making the Army a career," Said Helgren.said Wolberton.



Providing security
Buffalo, N.Y., native Sgt. Lavar Johnson, 26, a field artilleryman with Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, provides security during an impromptu vehicle checkpoint on the streets south of the "Fish Market" of the Raabi neighborhood of Baghdad's Adhamiyah District June 28. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

RESPECT ELDERS

(Continued from page 14)

Morton said.

The elders are often found throughout Jazira. Morton sometimes encounters them on the streets, seated on residents' porches, or at Neighborhood Advisory Council meetings, he said.

"We've done cordon and searches before and we walked into someone's house and there's an elder. He says, 'sit down, have chai (Iraqi tea),'" Morton said.

Although the older Iraqis do not pinpoint suspects, they do provide a sense of how the community feels about a number of issues, from extra-judicial killings to the limited electricity, said Morton.

During this encounter, the elders inquired about a solution to supply residents with sustained power. Morton told them the issue is being worked but it will take considerable time before the completion of a long-term solution, he said.

"There is really not much we can do with the generators because it just brings us back to the same point," he said of the elders' requests for more electricity generators. The dilemma is how to power



the generators on a regular basis when the only fuel comes off the black market. "It's a band aid on a big wound."

The long-term solution to Jazira's power problems is the reconstruction of Baghdad's power grid, a project several years from completion. "That's something that can't happen over night. Everything we can do quickly, we are doing," he said.

He reminded them of projects that are completed. The local hospital was rebuilt. Coalition Forces provided medical clinics. Some schools received significant aid, he said.

However, there is only so much the paratroopers can do on their

own, Morton explained to the elders.

"It's not all on us. We're here to help. But if you don't want to help there is only so much we can do," he said.

Before the paratroopers departed, one of the elders asked for help with a personal matter. He said his son went missing in 2004, presumably the victim of a kidnapping or worse. He asked Morton to look into the matter as a favor.

Morton said to the village elders, he would do everything in his power to help, which is something the paratroopers are already doing on a daily basis in Jazira.



Soldiers from Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment set up a serving line with meals prepared from a Mobile Field Kitchen Trailer at an outpost near Taji July 3. The Soldiers said they are keeping busy doing missions staged from the outpost which now has many creature comforts and serves as a second home to them.

Right: Cpl. Charles Breeding (left), a medic, attached to Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment and Antrim, N.H. native Spc. James Murchough, a scout for Troop C, build a book shelf to place in an operations center on an outpost near Taji, Iraq July 3.



Photos: life on a combat outpost near Taji

U.S. Army photos taken by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp while on assignment with the 1st Sqdrn., 7th Cav. Regt.



Above: Within minutes, Pvt. Brandon Reed, a scout with Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, climbs rapidly into a gunner's turret on a humvee at combat outpost near Taji, Iraq July 3 after his platoon receives orders to go on an unscheduled mission outside the wire.



Left: Sgt. Jon Cambridge (right) and Pfc. Gary Kale, both infantrymen with Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment enjoy a movie after their guard shift on an outpost near Taji July 3. Below: To pass the time, as a joke, Staff Sgt. Kevin Horschel (left), a scout with Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, makes a Soldier, Pfc. Shawn Mekkes, do push-ups on his birthday.



Red Lion gets to know the populace in Fira Shia, attends sheik meeting

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

1st Brigade Combat Team,
1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

FIRA SHIA, Iraq – The Soldiers of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment are reaching out in operations to build relationships and trust with people living in the areas in which they patrol here.

In one such outreach project, the troops from Btry. B conducted a census to gather an accurate assessment of population size and statistics on the area here while at the same time interacting with the local populace July 12.

“We grew accustomed to doing these types of operations in our last area and now we’re in a place that is a farming village that hasn’t had a lot of direct coalition interaction,” said Capt. Robert Callaghan, Btry. B commander, who hails from Winterpark, Fla. and explained that interacting with the people of Fira Shia also helps in getting information that leads to finding insurgents as well as weapons caches. “We’ve been very successful in the area so far and the people have been very nice and cooperative.”

“We’re getting a feel for the population here, seeing how they’re doing, and also talking to local leaders,” said Sgt. 1st Class Marvin Lancaster, a Btry. B platoon sergeant and native of Tuskegee, Ala.

Along with collecting the census, Btry. B Soldiers handed out school supplies and Iraqi flags to the children living in the neighborhoods.

“Giving out school supplies is a good step toward defeating extremist ideologies that exist because it gives us the opportunity to reach out to the future of Iraq—the children,” said Spc. Mulkey, a Btry. B medic, who is a New Orleans native. “As we continue building trust with the people and make them feel more comfortable around us, they start opening up and are willing to help us find insurgents that may be working in their neighborhoods.”

“Being from a country that was built on freedom, we’re helping the Iraqi people to achieve their own successes in gaining the same freedoms that we have back at home,” said Spc. Andrew Ramos, a field artilleryman from Btry. B, who claims Ontario, Calif. as home.

Although the census-gathering operation



Sgt. 1st Class Eric Vaught, a platoon sergeant with Battery B, 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment who calls Fort Lewis, Wash. home, collects census information from an Iraqi man in Fira Shia, Iraq July 12. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

did not involve participation by Iraqi security forces, Btry. B troops said they have, in fact, been performing a lot more cordon and searches and other joint operations in their areas of operations in a partnership with Iraqi troops from the 3rd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division.

“One of our biggest tasks has been helping the Iraqi Army to transition to doing their own security,” said Pfc. Josh Wedding, a field artilleryman with Btry. B and a native of Rushville, Ind. “The IAs here have really been doing a great job.”

“We went out on one recent mission with them and we were just getting to the objective and they had already accomplished the mission, finding caches and capturing detainees,” added Wedding. “They had wrapped things up so quickly that we were really amazed.”

Another major recent success for Fira Shia involved local area sheiks coming together to fight sectarian violence and begin the reconciliation process.

“For the first time, a couple of weeks ago, the Sunni and Shia sheiks came together and began discussing business and issues in nahia meetings,” said Callaghan. “It’s good that they’re talking now and it’s a great step in the

right direction.”

“(Working at local levels to solve problems) is something that will help Iraq towards building its own independent nation,” said Lancaster. “We’re getting involved in helping them serve their area so that they can eventually become self reliant and end the violence that has plagued them for so long.”

After taking a census of Fira Shia, Btry. B Soldiers drove to a meeting of local area sheiks from Aqar Qaf. The Aqar Qaf nahia which lies in southern Abu Ghraib also overlaps areas for which Soldiers from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment are responsible. As such, the nahia meeting included Btry. B and also involved the participation of leadership from Co. B, 2nd Bn., 5th Cav. Regt.

In addition, the battalion commanders for both the 2nd Bn., 5th Cav. Regt. (Lt. Col. Kurt Pinkerton) and the 1st Bn., 37th FA (Lt. Col. Kenneth Kamper) helped facilitate this particular nahia meeting. Some topics discussed at the meeting included how the villages can acquire generators that will supply power needs; hiring contractors for projects within the villages; the hiring of teachers for village schools; and the building of an Iraqi Police station for Abu Ghraib, among other topics.



**U.S. Army photo by
Capt. Brent Hayward
2nd Bn., 227th Avn. Regt.**

*Chief Warrant Officer 2
Jeremy Turner, a
medical evacuation pilot
for Company C, 2nd
"Lobo" Battalion, 227th
Aviation Regiment, 1st
Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st
Cavalry Division, and a
native of Rockwell, N.C.
goes through some pre-
flight checks on his
UH-60 Black Hawk
helicopter before
heading out on a
mission.*

Flying heroes bear red cross

*Medical evacuation crews
work long hours to airlift
wounded combat troops*

By Spc. Nathan Hoskins

*1st Air Cavalry Brigade,
1st Cavalry Division
Public Affairs Office*

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – It doesn't matter that the weather conditions have grounded every other aircraft around Baghdad. It doesn't matter that there are hostile forces near the landing zone. The 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division's medical evacuation crews take off in their helicopters because they have a mission: to save a life.

The Soldiers of Company C, 2nd "Lobo" Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, feel that their job is worth the extra risks and worth the extra effort to get up in the air, said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jeremy Turner, a MEDEVAC pilot for Co. C, who hails from Rockwell, N.C.

It wasn't a particularly busy day on the airfield due to the weather when Co. C got a call recently. There were two Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, a task force attached to the 2nd BCT, 82nd Airborne

Division, who needed to be evacuated due to serious injuries sustained in an improvised explosive device attack, he said.

Just three days prior, the MEDEVAC team suffered the tremendous loss of one of their comrades. Sgt. William Brown, a MEDEVAC crew chief, was killed during an indirect fire attack.

Brown was tending to an aircraft when enemy fires came in, killing him instantly. With the loss of their friend still weighing heavy on their hearts, the pilots and crew chiefs of Co. C still had a job to do.

"The job has to get done. (Sgt.) Brown is missed every day, but there are many more men and women out there like him that expect us to be there," said Turner.

Still, even with this tenacity to fly into the unknown and save Soldiers, there are some conditions that are just too dangerous to fly into, and this was one of those days ... or was it?

A minimum distance of three miles of visibility is what is necessary for other pilots to take off, but this day there was only about a half-mile visibility due to a dense dust storm, grounding all MEDEVAC birds from Balad to Kuwait, said Turner.

Although the dangers were a reality, there were still Soldiers in the field at risk of dying without their aid, so

Turner and his chain of command discussed it, he said.

With permission all the way from the brigade commander, the mission was green-lighted, said Turner.

"When poor weather and very limited visibility grounds the Air Force and brings all other aircraft back to base ... the only aircraft (crew) that will risk themselves day or night, in combat, boils down to the MEDEVAC team," said Reno, Nev., native Lt. Col. Christopher Joslin, the Lobo commander.

Flying in miserable weather and in hostile skies is normal for the MEDEVAC teams, said Turner.

"That's where soldiers usually get hurt. It's never on a sunny day, right by the beach. They're out there doing the fighting, we're there to try and make sure they make it back in from the fight, if we're called," he said.

Within mere minutes after getting the go ahead from their command, Turner and his crew were up and on their way to the scene, said Turner.

One of the super-human traits of a MEDEVAC team is being able to run up their aircraft and be in the air in 10 minutes or less, said Joslin.

"Most aviators that fly UH-60 (Black Hawks) outside of the MEDEVAC community doubt that (timeframe) is really possible," said Joslin. "The only crews I (See **MEDEVAC**, page 24)

Centurions celebrate 2nd Birthday on Taji



U.S. Army photo

Personnel from the 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion gathered to celebrate the battalion's 2nd Birthday during a ceremony on Camp Taji, Iraq July 18. The event included a speech by Col. Paul E. Funk II, commander, 1st "IRONHORSE" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, an awards presentation and a cake-cutting ceremony.



U.S. Army photo

Above: Col. Paul E. Funk II (second from right), commander, 1st "IRONHORSE" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division; Lt. Col. Michael Dillard (left), commander, 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion and Pvt. Jessica Kellogg of 1st BSTB who hails from Golden Valley, Minn., cut the cake at the event. Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Green (right) of Memphis, Tenn., the 1BSTB command sergeant major, holds the scabbard for the saber used to cut the cake. Right: Col. Funk shakes the hand of Spc. Victor Diaz after presenting him with the Combat Action Badge during the awards portion of the 1BSTB birthday observance.



U.S. Army photo

MEDEVAC

Continued from Page 22

have ever seen do that are MEDEVAC crews and the chase crews that have been trained by MEDEVAC crews.”

Ten minutes later, the Black Hawk was landing at its destination to pick up the wounded Soldiers. Less than 10 minutes after that, they were landing at the local Combat Support Hospital, said Turner.

One of the two Soldiers delivered to the hospital, required extensive surgery to address his wounds. The pair survived the hazards of war because of the MEDEVAC's timely response and selfless service, said Capt. Jared Purcell, the public affairs officer for Task Force 1-26.

“During combat operations over the last year, Air MEDEVAC units have risked their lives to save the lives of TF 1-26 Soldiers,” he said. “They move to the sound of the guns, and do what it takes to get to the patient.”

The Soldiers of Co. C see the bloodiest part of battle nearly every day – it's their job. Even so, there has to be a release, a time to put it all away and focus on things a little less dark, said Turner, who was a Navy Corpsman for 11 years before joining the Army and flying MEDEVAC helicopters.

“I've, unfortunately, gotten hardened to (the sight of the injured and dead). It still catches up and hurts every once in a while, but you just can't dwell (on it),” he said.

Although this mission had a happy ending – both Soldiers survived – others don't end so well, said Turner.

The medics are the ones who are affected the most because they do all they can to save the patients' lives, but sometimes it's to no avail, he said.

“(The MEDEVAC members) won't talk about the impact on themselves when the injuries are so bad that, despite their



A UH-60 Black Hawk medical evacuation helicopter from Company C, 2nd “Lobo” Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, gets ready to head out on a mission at Camp Taji, Iraq. The MEDEVAC crews are known for their ability to be off the ground in less than ten minutes after receiving a call for their assistance.

best efforts, they cannot save the patient, or (they) arrive only to find that the patient has already died,” said Joslin.

Soldiers are not the only ones who benefit from the expertise of

other missions that came up while they were out, or they'll just head on home to wait for the next call.

In most cases, the crew never knows the eventual outcome of

“We're just regular people doing our job---saving Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and even civilians...is our job.”

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jeremy Turner

MEDEVAC pilot, 2nd Bn., 227th Avn. Regt.

the MEDEVAC teams, said Joslin.

“Hundreds of Soldiers, Iraqis, contractors, civilians and even the enemy, would not be alive today if it were not for the extraordinary individual and collective feats we ask these American heroes to do on a daily, routine basis,” he said.

The terrorists who fired the mortars that killed Brown would get the same treatment as a Soldier who was trying to protect the innocent Iraqis.

After picking up and dropping off their patients, the MEDEVAC team will sometimes head on to

the patient they dropped off.

However, if Turner could say something to one of the hundreds of lives he has helped save, he said it might go something like this: “Good to see you and thank you for your sacrifices ... can I buy you a beer?”

Joslin refers to his MEDEVAC teams as “the closest thing to angels on earth,” but Turner, like most modest heroes, won't admit that what he does is special.

“We're just regular people doing our job – saving Soldiers, Marines, Airmen, and even civilians ... is our job,” said Turner.

News from homefront: First Team honors heroes

1st Cav. Div. honors Soldiers and FRG volunteers

By Sgt. Cheryl Cox

1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

FORT HOOD, Texas— The 1st Cavalry Division leadership recognized injured Soldiers and First Team volunteers who have made a difference in the lives of troops in a ceremony at the Fort Hood Catering and Conference Center July 24.

“Today we recognize the selfless service and sacrifice of two different groups of heroes,” said Col. Larry Phelps, the 1st Cavalry Division (rear) commander, during the open remarks of the ceremony.

“First, we recognize the heroes from the war-front. Those heroes you see in front of you today that hold their mission, their unit, their battle buddies and their country in front of their own well-being,” he said. “We also recognize our heroes of the home front who put the needs of other families and other troopers ahead of their own. And we likewise, salute you.”

Brig. Gen. William F. Grimsley, the deputy commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division, pinned Purple Hearts on 28 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers.

“The Army is ultimately all about Soldiers,” said Grimsley when he addressed the audience. “They are the centerpiece in our formations, and serve as our credentials every day. They are immediate, ready reminders of what makes our Army great. And they are tremendous representatives of our nation.”

As Grimsley addressed those in attendance, he explained the importance of the day’s ceremony – honoring the Soldiers.

“We have no shortage of number of people who call themselves heroes,” said Grimsley. “But these Soldiers sitting in front of you are true heroes. They do what they do with little fan fare, and they do it well.”



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Cheryl Cox, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

Sgt. Ryan Fellenz, a Soldier with 1157th Transportation Company, 15th Sustainment Brigade, receives his Purple Heart from Brig. Gen. William F. Grimsley, the deputy commanding general for 4th Infantry Division during the Purple Heart and Volunteer of the Month Ceremony held July 24 at the Fort Hood Catering and Conference Center.

Along with the Purple Heart recipients, First Team volunteers were recognized for their selfless service to their units, families and communities.

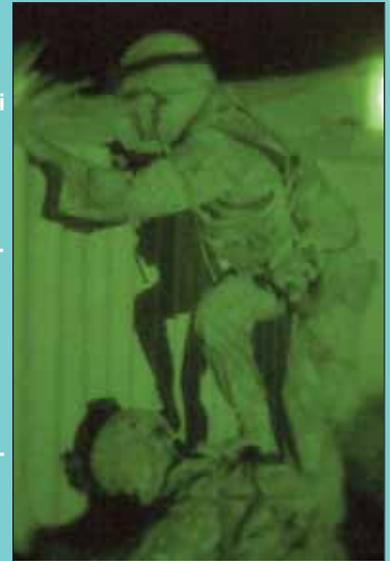
“With the return of our loved ones on the horizon, it is so very important that we not only take a moment to recognize those who have gone above and beyond the

call of duty, but to also finish this deployment as strong as we began many months ago,” said Carol Brooks, wife of Brig. Gen. Vincent K Brooks, the 1st Cavalry Division’s deputy commanding general for support. “We would be lost without the unending support from our Cav volunteers.”



Staff Sgt. Uvalde Harris, a squad leader for Battery B, 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment uses his flashlight to look behind a dresser during a raid July 10.

Right: Staff Sgt. James Copeland uses his body as a step to assist an Iraqi Soldier over the fence of a home in Kem village after knocking with no response from the resident. The IA Soldier is with 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade 9th Iraqi Army Division working along side the Soldier from Demon Company, 2nd Battalion 8th Cavalry Regiment, July 9.



Through The Lens of Combat Camera

As seen through the cameras of Sgt. Rachel M. Ahner, 982nd Combat Camera Company (Airborne).



Above: Captain Kimberly Latham an Army doctor uses her stethoscope to check the lungs of an eight month old girl during a medical operation in Hor Al Bosh, Iraq July 15.



Left: Pfc. Jennifer Thornton, a medic for 115th Brigade Support Battalion takes the blood pressure of a local farmer in Hor Al Bosh, Iraq July 15. Below: Spc. Louis Garcia of Co. D, 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt. retrieves something from his front pouch during a cordon and knock mission in Kem, Iraq as Iraqi Army Soldiers from the 3rd Bde., 9th IA Div. (Mech.) provide security.

