



DRAGON FIRE

Vol. 1, Issue 3

August 2007

Guarding Iraqi Freedom

For the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

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Dragon Hammer pounds insurgents

Dragon Soldiers, families and friends- The month of July was a busy and productive one for the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

We initiated Operation Dragon Hammer to take the fight to extremist elements across the Rashid District, but focused our efforts in the Doura area of East Rashid.

Our Soldiers' tremendous success is quantified in the basic numbers: the first week of the operation, there were 29 direct fire attacks against our forces in the three main neighborhoods we focused on. The second week, those attacks dropped to 13, and then 8 in the third, before dropping again to 7 in the last week of July. The reduction in attacks against our forces by more than 75 percent is a true testament to the effectiveness of our work and our courageous Soldiers, as our enemies have not had any sort of answer for our focused and well-executed operations.

Indirect fire and improvised explosive device attacks also dropped drastically, as our troops pushed the bad guys out of Doura, and have kept the pressure on them by denying them the freedom to impose their will on the peace-loving people of Iraq. Brigadier General Brooks recently said that the progress the troops have made there fighting Al Qaeda and Jaysh al Mahdi extremists is the best that has been seen in Baghdad thus far.

We've also started working closely with Sunni tribal leaders who are renouncing the barbarism and violence of Al Qaeda



Col. Ricky D. Gibbs on patrol.

eda in Iraq, and starting to cooperate with us against them. I attribute this to Iraqis seeing our American Soldiers as genuinely committed to seeing things improve here. The extremists on the other hand, are committed to their own agenda of bombing and shooting indiscriminately regardless of the consequences against innocents.

To the families back home in the States and Europe- thank you for your continued love and support through this lengthy deployment. Know that your Soldiers are performing magnificently and that we are all grateful for the progress and success they represent. Our brave men and women are beating the streets of Baghdad and braving the brutal and oppressive heat each and every day. I am very proud of you and our brave Soldiers.

As the summer continues here, the challenges will persist, but I know that the Dragon Brigade will also sustain itself as a force for positive change here in Iraq. As you read the stories contained in the subsequent pages, I ask you to remember that they are just a small sampling of the many successes our Soldiers are having in support of our operations, and that many other great stories are unfolding across the brigade.

Keep after it, and reflect on our division motto: No mission too difficult, No sacrifice too great...DUTY FIRST!

*Col. Ricky D. Gibbs
Dragon 6*

Dragon Brigade fighting with valor

Dragon Brigade Soldiers and Families: Webster's Dictionary defines valor as: boldness or determination in facing great danger, esp. in battle. Army Regulation defines it as: heroism under battle conditions.

Since the 1st Infantry Division's beginnings during the First World War, our Soldiers have been putting the needs of others above their own. Facing the need to go over the top and cross no-man's land, Big Red One Soldiers did their jobs and performed gallantly.

In 1942, our Soldiers withstood an onslaught of the German Army's Tiger Tanks and held the line against the odds. In the 1960s, they walked the wet, humid jungles of Vietnam hunting the elusive North Vietnamese.

Today our Soldiers are doing the same in the hot, dry desert sun. In the Army Soldiers can receive numerous awards that reflect the selfless nature of their actions – ARCOMs, Bronze Stars with "V" Device, Silver Stars, Distinguished Service Cross and the Medal of Honor.

But what exactly is valor. We have heard it many times and have seen it portrayed in the movies countless times.



*Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Champagne, Capt. Jones,
1st Sgt. Burdine and 1st Lt. Molina in the Doura
Market*

It is risking ones own life to help the needs of others. It is going places and doing things that most people would never go or do. Valor is the daring shown when face with insurmountable odds. It is essence of the "Warrior Ethos."

It is the embodiment of the Army Values: Loyalty, Duty, Responsibility, Selfless Service Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage.

Courage, bravery, spirit, and fearlessness are shown everyday by our troopers who scour the Rashid District for those whose goal is to spread fear and discord

through the citizens.

In this issue you will read the stories of four Dragons who received Army Commendation Medals with Valor. I'm so very proud of all our Soldiers and the legacy they are establishing in this incredible fight against the enemy. As we stand side by side and take the fight to the enemy Leonidas of Sparta at the battle of Thermopylae said it best "Remember this day, men, for it will be yours for all time."

*"Get After It"
Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Champagne
Dragon 7*

FROM THE MOUTH OF DRAGONS



Gina Notrica and the Bootleggers perform at the Forward Operating Base Falcon Dining Facility July 9. The show at FOB Falcon was a stop on the band's "High Heels in Iraq" Tour. (Smith/4th IBCT Public Affairs)

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Dragon Fire is an authorized publication for members of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. Contents of Dragon Fire are not necessarily official views of or endorsed by the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, the U.S. Army, or 4IBCT, 1ID.

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On the cover

Sgt. Russell Lataille, from Ashboro, N.C., an infantryman on the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment personal security detachment stands guard outside Joint Security Station Vanguard. The 1-18th "Vanguards" out of Schweinfurt, Germany are attached to the 4th IBCT, based at Fort Riley, Kan. (Timmons/4th IBCT Public Affairs)

Scouting

across 35th Street



Above: Spc. Kenneth Hickman, a vehicle commander with the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's personal security detachment from Leavenworth, Kan., pulls security during a battlefield circulation in southern Baghdad's Rashid District July 12.

Right: Sgt. 1st Class Gannon Edgy, a platoon sergeant with Troop A, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Brunswick, Ga., reports to his company commander, Capt. Nicholas Cook from Lansing, Mich., while on patrol in southern Baghdad's Doura region July 12.

By Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT Public Affairs

Seven weeks ago, the citizens of East Doura couldn't walk down 35th Street. Seven weeks ago, there would have been an explosion or gunfire waiting for them.

Seven weeks ago, the Raiders weren't in the area.

That's how long the Soldiers of Troop A, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division have been overseeing the security of the 35th Street market in southern Baghdad's Rashid District.

In those few weeks, approximately 20 shops have already opened up, and there hasn't been a single attack.

Capt. Nicholas Cook, the commander of Troop A, 1-4 Cav. from Lansing, Mich., said while the northern section of the street has become a hub of economic activity, the unit is not ready to sit back on its haunches.

"We want the whole street to come back," he said. "Hopefully more businesses will open up on the southern end of 35th Street, and they'll continue to open up."

Sgt. 1st Class Gannon Edgy, a platoon sergeant with Trp A, 1-4 Cav. from Brunswick, Ga., said his Soldiers are noticing the difference.

"When we first took over, people didn't want to stop and talk to us," he said. "Now, locals seek us out to talk to us."

Capt. William Johnson, a business analyst with the 4th IBCT's embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team from Minnetonka, Minn., said success at the 35th Street Market coin-



cides with the overall strategy in Iraq.

“Economics and governance are important within the (Counter-Insurgency) strategy that Gen. (David) Petraeus developed to allow the Iraqis to stand on their own,” Johnson said. “Ultimately, if we develop the governance capacity for the Iraqis, they can govern themselves in a responsible fashion.

“Then we can go home, and equivalent to that, if we can build up the economy, we can put people to work, people won’t be doing things that are detrimental to themselves or U.S. troops.”

In an area where Al Qaeda had a foothold, where the terrorists could move unabated, citizens of Iraq can now find real estate offices, restaurants, auto parts stores, and computer stores in the market. Cook said this would not be the case without the relationships his Soldiers have developed.

“They work hard with the people, they talk with the people, they make people feel that we are not strangers, and that we are actually part of the community,” Cook said. “Just making them feel that we are there for their security. The troopers worked really hard to become part of this community.”

For leaders like Edgy, the type of fight has shifted dramatically in a few short years, and therefore, so must the tactics.

“(This deployment) is a more three-dimensional, four-dimensional war,” he said. “It went from knowing the enemy to having to hunt and fight the enemy. It’s become an intelligence battlefield.

“It’s like your own hometown. You have to know what’s going on.”

Johnson said 1-4 Cav’s hard work has paid off, but there’s still more to do.

“We are making some success, but given more time we can potentially grow our success,” he said. “For example, (the success) we’ve had in Doura Market to other economic areas within the sector.”

Edgy said to grow the success on 35th Street, the merchants must have a voice in the happenings in their neighborhood. “Letting shop owners know the plan and ask their opinion,” he said. “Making them feel involved is the key.”



Left: Spc. Richard Robinson, a gunner with 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division’s personal security detachment from Plainfield, N.J., pulls security from his turret while on patrol in southern Baghdad’s Rashid District July 12.

Below: Lt. Col. Jim Crider, the commander of 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Hopkinsville, Ky., talks with vendors at the 35th Street Market in southern Baghdad’s Doura region July 12. Crider and his Raiders were addressing any concerns the shopowners may have.



Sgt. 1st Class Gannon Edgy, a platoon sergeant with Troop A, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Brunswick, Ga., checks out a local national’s wares at the 35th Street Market in southern Baghdad July 12.

FUELING THE

TIME

Story, photos by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – Establishing essential services, such as providing people with energy, is one of the key components of the counter-insurgency fight in Iraq, and it is a point of reference for progress being made in the country.

Company B, 2nd Battalion 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division out of Fort Carson, Colo., delivered fuel to citizens living in the Doura region of southern Baghdad July 22, doing their part to combat the insurgency in the area and providing hundreds with a vital need.

Even on a hot summer day, Iraqi men, women and children, turned out in force, reducing a 13,000-liter tank of benzene to a mere 150 over the course of the day.

Residents of the neighborhood were still turning out into the evening hours, showing just how much demand there is for energy in the region.

The people use the fuel to operate generators which powers their entire homes, providing such necessities as an air conditioner to keep cool in the scorching summer months, stoves to heat food, and televisions to fight off boredom.

While the mission may have seemed like simple good will, 1st Lt. Daniel McAllister, the platoon leader of 3rd platoon, Company D, 2-12 Inf. which is currently attached to Co. B, said the mission helped the unit's effort in the dangerous Doura region.

"It shows the population that we care about them," the Hornell, N.Y., native said. "It helps to win over the population so we get more tips, and it helps the security situation."

Over the course of the mission, the platoon worked closely with the 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division to secure the site, protecting civilians from vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attacks and small arms fire from any terrorist who may want to impede the fuel distribution.

The Iraqi troops blocked off the area using concertina wire and humvees while American Soldiers watched over the area from rooftops.

These benzene drops help the fight by swaying Iraqis that may be on the cusp of becoming insurgents to supporting Multi-National Division-Baghdad forces, said Staff Sgt. Jordan Martell, the platoon sergeant for 3rd platoon, Co. D, 2-12 Inf. from Canyon



City, Colo.

Martell said the benzene drop broke up the rhythm of every day missions. This change in the routine helped prevent Anti-Iraqi Forces from being able to plan an attack on the troops, he said.

Along with weekly propane distributions, McAllister said the benzene deliveries will continue to take place with more and more responsibility being given to the Iraqi Army.



Opposite: Citizens of the Doura region in southern Baghdad line up for benzene July 22. The Iraqis endured the sweltering heat all day long and were still turning out into the evening hours.

Opposite Bottom: Capt. Jim Keirse, commander of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division from Highland Falls, N.Y., and the commander of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division make phone calls to get the word out about the benzene distribution in southern Baghdad's Doura region July 22.

Top Right : An Iraqi child waits in line for fuel in Doura July 22. The benzene delivery was important as it swayed public opinion in favor of Multi-National Division-Baghdad Forces, which in turn leads to more tips from local nationals.

Top Middle : An Iraqi from the local oil refinery pumps fuel in southern Baghdad's Doura region July 22. This man was busy as a 13,000-liter tank of benzene was reduced to 150 liters by the end of the day.

Below: A Warrior with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment stands guard as a truck dispenses fuel to local residents in Doura.



“Our goal is to get them a couple times a week and make it an (Iraqi Army) operation,” he said. “Eventually, it’s the (Iraqi Security Forces) that are going to be taking over the security so the more we can turn over to them the better.”

In addition to the benefits of helping civilians, McAllister said there was an extra bonus from the mission by spending time with the citizens.

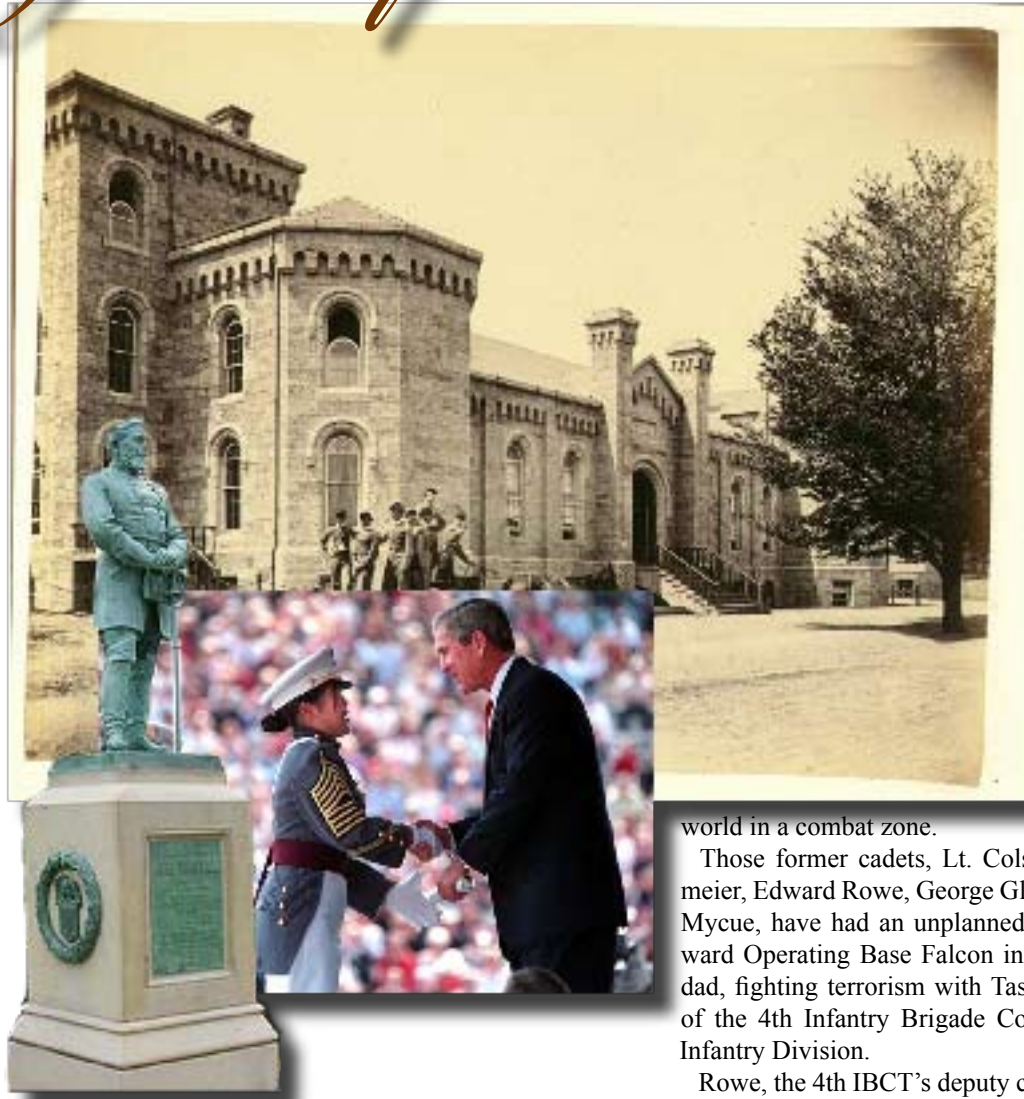
“We definitely like interacting with the little kids. We try to get as many (toys) out there as possible,” he said. “The people in 826 have been

very receptive to us because we’ve made the security situation in there better. The more safe it becomes the more open they are to us.”

McAllister added that interacting with the people helps the Soldiers get more familiar with their area of operations, which in turn helps them provide security.

“We’re seeing a lot of progress in that area.”

The Warriors of 2-12 Inf. are currently deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad of Fort Carson, Colo. They are attached to the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

'Gray line' points toward

by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT, Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – In 1987, four West Point cadets flung their full-dress hats into the air, signifying their graduation from the service academy. Little did they know, in 20 years, their hats would be landing on the same base halfway across the

world in a combat zone.

Those former cadets, Lt. Cols. Joseph Birchmeier, Edward Rowe, George Glaze, and Alfredo Mycue, have had an unplanned reunion at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad, fighting terrorism with Task Force Dragon of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

Rowe, the 4th IBCT's deputy commander from Gaithersburg, Md., who was in the same squad as Birchmeier when the two first entered the academy, said it took him by surprise to be in the same unit.

"This far down the road, I never would have imagined that he and I would have been in the same brigade," he said, "let alone four of us from the same class." Birchmeier, the commander of the 4-1 Brigade Special Troops Battalion from Chestnut, Mich., appreciated the uniqueness of the situation.

FALCON



Lt. Col. Joseph Birchmeier (Taylor/4-1)

1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Enon, Ohio, said the four's presence reflected highly on his class.

"It appears the class of '87 is supporting the war effort across Baghdad. It is a neat feeling," he said. "Our country we strengthen' is our motto, and it appears that our class has stepped forward to strengthen the country at our time of need.

"It's a pretty great honor to be a part of that class."

Rowe said the members of this class answering the call of a nation in need was a testament to West Point instilling in its students a dedication to their country.

"I think it's a credit to the service academy in preparing people for a lifetime of service," he said. "I think each of us individually has made our own decisions along the way, and



Lt. Col. Edward Rowe



Lt. Col. George Glaze

"I think it's really odd; I've seen more classmates here in Baghdad than I have in 20 years," he said. "It's nice to see we still have these classmates around."

Glaze, commander of the

we're not here because we went to the service academy.

"We're here to serve, just like every other Soldier."

Rowe said due to the bond between the graduates, there is a greater camaraderie between them.

"The common shared experience from four years at school gives us a lot to talk about as far as memories go and recollecting," he said. "We have so many shared experiences in common."

Glaze said these shared experiences help in a combat zone.

"When you can come into a hostile environment like combat, it is neat to be able to go into a room and know some of these people that would otherwise be strange to you," he said.

"You know them from other tried

experiences like the four years of West Point. Having had that shared bond like west point definitely helps build relationships quicker in combat."

Birchmeier also felt the common bond would help strengthen teamwork.

"I think we're probably more of a likelihood for us to work together," he said. "They have this saying at West Point, 'co-operate graduate.'

"I think that kind of follows you through the military through the years."

Mycue, the commander of the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry (Stryker) Regiment, said there's a mutual respect between the graduates.

"We know the path that we've taken, and we have a lot of respect for that path we've taken," he said. "You have to trust the judgment and you have to trust the hard work and the service ethic of somebody who has selflessly gave and gave and gave all that time and continues to do so over here in Iraq."

He added that having an old friend in a combat zone helped with overcoming the obstacles of a deployment.

"It's great because it's nice to have people that you know and that you've known for years and who you trust their judgment to work with you and solve daily problems," he said.

Rowe added that the service of the class of '87 is a point of pride for him.

"I'm proud of the fact that there are four of us here not because we're all from West Point," he said. "I'm proud of an association from that far back has lead to four guys who continue to serve proudly and effectively in the Army."



Lt. Col. Alfredo Mycue

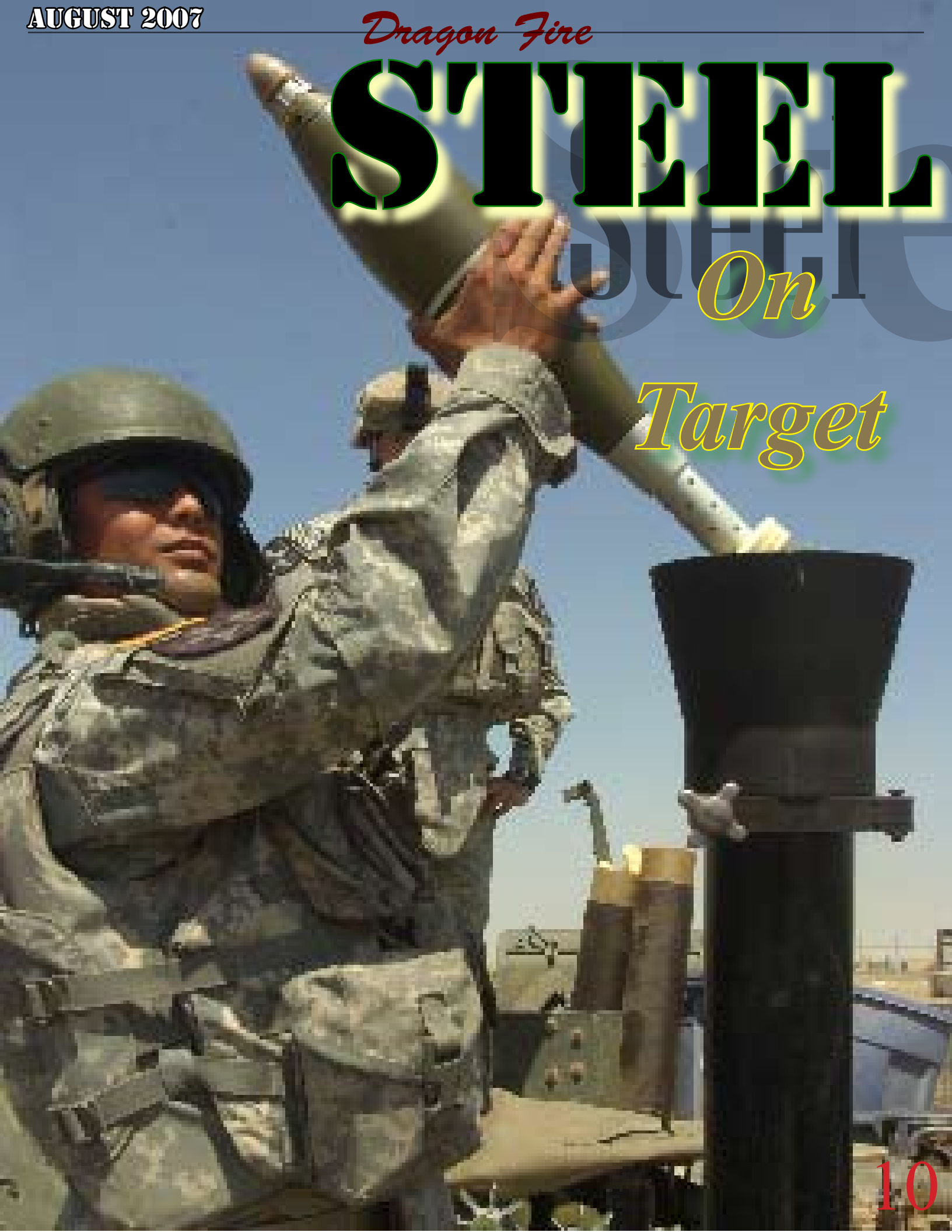
AUGUST 2007

Dragon Fire

STEEL

On

Target



Falcon



By Sgt. 1st Class Robert Timmons
4th IBCT, Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – They wait for the sound of the guns. Some put together models. Others read novels to pass time as they wait. While one listens closely to the sound of the radio.

But they all listen for the ominous sounds of incoming – the wail of the sirens or the audible thumps of rounds impacting inside Forward Operating Base Falcon.

Then they jump into action. They are ones tasked to protect Soldiers working on the base by providing quick and accurate responses.

They are the mortar platoon of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment of the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. While at Falcon the Tomahawks are attached to the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., based out of Fort Riley, Kan.

Even though they are not in the same division, the mortar team is glad to provide support whether they wear an Indian head, red one or any other patches on their shoulders.

Such was the case July 7, when a unit from 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division was in a major firefight south of Falcon.

“We could hear the firing in the distance,” said Staff Sgt. Casey Marciano, a squad leader for the Fort Lewis, Wash.-based unit. “The unit was almost out of ammo when we received the call. They were getting flanked when they called us.”

Marciano, 39, father to 11-month-old Seth and member of the Camp Falcon Hobby Club, said his crew manned their tube in minutes and was lobbing mortars down range.

Usually when a fire mission comes in the verify

coordinates, man the weapon system, receive the vicinity grid, get air clearance and fire the shots.

“The enemy was moving around their flank,” said Staff Sgt. Richard Brown, a squad leader from Eldorado, Kan. “They had called in Air Force support but they couldn’t drop bombs because of fears of collateral damage.”

With the action being so near to the base artillery fire was out of the question so the mortars got the nod, the unit’s platoon sergeant said.

The platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Scott Mathis, 35, from Paris, Tenn., praised the mortar crew about that night.

“We have speed and accuracy that you don’t have from ground-mounted systems,” the father of five said. “We are up and ready and just need brigade to clear the land and air. Our guys are one of the few crews (mortar) platoons that are actually doing mortar crew stuff.”

It was not until after they had fired their 120mm high-explosive rounds did they learn the outcome.

“It makes me feel very good to know what we did,” Mathis said. “And I know it makes them feel they are in the middle of the fight.”

Some members of the platoon, which as spent two years honing their skills together, credit their accuracy as a factor in the decline of indirect fire shot at Falcon.

A few weeks back, an enemy mortar team was operating with relative impunity 3 Km. outside of the bases’ walls, lobbing rounds into the installation and then scurrying off to another firing point. That was until a forward observer in one of the towers teamed up with the platoon,” Marciano said.

Marciano and Brown said that the observer spotted the shooters, got the range and called it in – the mortar team did the rest. Since then, the amount of indirect fire shot into the camp has decreased significantly, they said.

While the crew has seen significant action, there have been a few times where they were at the tube ready to fire, when they were told to stand down. Such is the life of a mortar crew, they said.

The five-man crew and another similar team stay in trailers at their firing position, waiting for the call and doing what Marciano calls, “living here 24-7 and trying to maintain morale.”



Top: A mortar crew with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment poses near their Stryker combat vehicle on Forward Operating Base Falcon, July 23. Top row from left: Spc. Solomon Wise, Spc. Jeffery Holcomb. Bottom row from left: Staff Sgt. Casey Marciano, Spc. Matthew Gordon, Spc. Timothy Henery, Staff Sgt. Richard Brown, 1st Lt. Joshua Sisson and Sgt. 1st Class Scott Mathis. Left: Spc. Jeffery Holcomb, 22, a mortar crew member from Mechanicsville, Md., and father of a 2-year-old girl Jordan and husband to Elizabeth, listens to radio traffic as his team waits for a fire mission at Forward Operating Base Falcon, July 23.

Opposite: Spc. Zachary Fejeran, an assistant gunner with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, from Yego, Guam, loads mortar tube during an exercise with Iraqi Army soldiers at Forward Operating Base Falcon June 10. (Smith/4th IBCT Public Affairs)

VALOR

To the sound of the guns

Dragons' efforts recognized

by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT Public Affairs

Since arriving in Baghdad to help maintain security, the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, has been leading the fight, with Soldiers and airmen acting valorously to protect the citizens of Iraq.

Airman Goes on Auto-pilot

An airman attached to the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team was awarded the Army Commendation Medal with a Device for Valor June 8 for his actions that led to the saving of a Soldier's life.

Special Agent Travis Guthmiller, a member of Weapons Intelligence Team 10 of Task Force Troy from Jamestown, N.D., was responding to a weapons cache-finding in the Doura region of southern Baghdad on April 1 when the rear vehicle of his convoy was struck by an improvised explosive device.

The deep-buried IED blasted off the front end of the humvee, ejecting the gunner from his turret



Guthmiller

and dropping the truck into the crater.

When the dust settled and Guthmiller could assess the damage, executing was the only thing on his mind.

"I was kind of just on auto-pilot," he said. "You had to do what you had to do while you're out there and make sure it got done."

Guthmiller did what he had to and more.

After sweeping the area for secondary IED's, the airman brought the lead vehicle closer to the blast site for extra security.

When that extra security was established, Guthmiller, who is combat lifesaver qualified, assisted the medics however he could.

After bringing a litter from the Explosive Ordnance Disposal truck and loading it, the convoy took off for the hospital.

On the way to the hospital, Guthmiller continued to go beyond his responsibilities by keeping the injured gunner's head still and insuring he could breathe normally.

The airman said the gravity of the situation didn't fully sink in until the next



day when he had time to think.

"I was kind of just thinking the next day 'That could have broken out into some crazy fighting. That could have been pretty hairy,'" he said

First Lt. Brett Gillet, a platoon leader with the 47th EOD Company from Killeen, Texas, said the Guthmiller's combination of situational awareness and action caught his eye.

"Anybody can react and say, 'Okay, let's go to the scene,' but he went to the scene, looked around at security, and noticed security wasn't as good as it could be," Gillet said. "He looked when he was in the truck and recognized that he was in the best position to help instead of just sitting there and saying, 'Okay, medic, you do your job, and I'll do my job.' There wasn't any hesitation."

Guthmiller, who is attached to Task Force Troy out of Minot Air Force Base, S.D. said receiving an award from a service aside from his own was a special feeling.

“It felt really good. I was surprised a little bit, but it’s cool to be an Air Force guy getting an Army award.”

Gillet said Guthmiller’s actions were worthy of his new decoration.

“If you asked (him), he’d say he’s just doing his job,” he said. “Maybe it is, maybe it isn’t, but it’s still saving a guy’s life, and it’s a pretty award-winning thing.

Despite receiving the recognition, the airman, who has been working with joint service units since August 2006 and at Forward Operating Base Falcon since January, passed credit onto everybody who was at the site that day.

“That was a really good, concerted effort by everybody that was out there,” he said. “I got a medal for what I did, but the guys out there, everybody just came together. It was really cool.”

When Pfc. Joshua Philippus got his first taste of combat, it wasn’t a nice and easy introduction. The danger of it all hit him right in the head. Literally.

Scout reacts under fire

Philippus, a cavalry scout with Troop A, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Houston, received an Army Commendation Medal with Valor July 20, for his actions in southern Baghdad’s Rashid District April 9.

Philippus and his platoon were on a presence patrol like any other that day. They had never even seen combat, in fact. When the platoon took fire, Philippus was in one mindset: to take action.

“We’d been training for this for a while,” he said. “Until that point it was boredom; we were just driving around in a city that I didn’t know.”

When word reached Philippus’ truck that their dismounts had been trapped by enemy gunfire, he told his driver to drive through a fence into the fight.

After positively identifying the enemy, Philippus returned fire. On his second box of ammunition, an enemy round struck his helmet, sending him flying against the glass in his turret and down into the humvee.

“I don’t know if I thought I was dead or what, but I was scared,” he said. “There were guys on the ground and they were still under heavy contact so I stood back up and kept firing.”

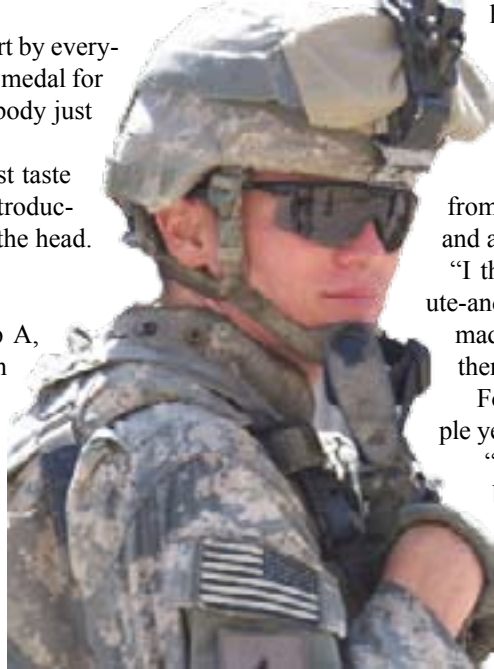
Sgt. 1st Class Troy Murray, Philippus’ platoon sergeant from Augusta, Ga., said his Soldier’s reaction was uncommon and awe-inspiring.

“I thought he was gone. I saw him go down, about a minute-and-a-half later he was back on the gun,” he said. “That made me proud. A lot of guys wouldn’t have gotten back up there.”

For Philippus, his reason to get back in the fight was a simple yet profound one: his fellow Soldiers still taking fire.

“When you’re out there, it’s either you, your friends, or the bad guy. I’m not gonna let one of my brothers go down because I’m scared,” he said. “So I stood back up.”

As for the recognition he’s received for his actions that day, Philippus is appreciative, but keeps it in perspective.



Phillipus

(Continued on next page)



VALOR

(From Previous Page)

“It means a lot, but I’ve had some really good friends die here,” he said. “In all honesty, I did my job—they gave everything.”

The friends he has lost in Iraq have motivated him to continue his mission, Philippus said.

“It’s people like that, that give their life for their country that make it worthwhile. It gives you a reason to fight. If they gave their lives and we just give up then it’s all in vain. Then my friends, my best friends, died for nothing.”

Raider medics rush through fire

When a Soldier is wounded in combat, they are the first people that come to mind. They are the medics, and good one’s are worth their weight in gold to Soldiers serving in Iraq.

Spc. Nicholas Roden, a medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Moline, Ill., and Spc. Nicholas Bryant, a medic with Company B, 1-4 Cav. from Baltimore, are two such professionals whose skill was recognized in an awards ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon July 20.

The two received the Army Commendation Medal with Valor for their actions with their respective units while on patrol in southern Baghdad’s Rashid District.

Roden, who works with the 1-4 Cav. personal security detachment, and his convoy were exiting a hostile area when he got word over the radio someone had been hit. When he heard this, there was only one thing on his mind.

“Get to my casualty and take care of him,” he said.

Roden did get to his casualty, despite having to cross an intersection that was still taking fire, and he did take care of that injured Soldier.

For Bryant, the method of attack was different, but his reactions were no less impressive.



Spc. Nicholas Roden, a medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Moline, Ill., gets the Army Commendation Medal with Valor pinned on by Lt. Col. Jim Crider, commander of 1-4 Cav., in a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon July 20.



Spc. Nicholas Bryant, a medic with Company B, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Baltimore, is congratulated by a fellow Soldier for receiving the Army Commendation Medal with Valor at Forward Operating Base Falcon July 20.

When his convoy was hit by an improvised explosive device, he immediately grabbed his aid bag and went to the vehicle.

After assessing the situation, he realized what he had to do. He removed his protective gear and crawled under the truck only to find that his comrade was beyond help.

Upon treating a casualty inside the truck who had his leg broken in three places, Bryant remained inside the vehicle as it was being lifted by a crane to stabilize his wounded patient, preventing further injuries.

“I just got a surge of adrenaline when I saw somebody hurt,” Bryant said. “You don’t think about yourself, you just worry about them. I just wanted to get them out as fast as I could.”

Staff Sgt. Grant Pratt, the medical treatment noncommissioned officer for 1-4 Cav. from Dillon, Mont., said it was good to see the medics recognized.

“It makes me feel good because usually medics don’t always get honored for the job that they do,” he said. “For our medics to be the only guys right now in the squadron, it makes me feel good for our guys to be recognized.”

Staff Sgt. Jacob Perez, the medical evacuation noncommissioned officer for 1-4 Cav. from Corpus Christi, Texas, said Bryant’s and Roden’s recognition reflects highly on his unit.

“I think it makes us look great,” Perez said. “We pretty much are the best medical platoon within the entire brigade, and everybody knows that.”

The Raiders’ medical platoon put in a lot of long hours prior to deploying, and Bryant and Roden’s actions are reflective of that, their NCOs said.

“We trained almost on a daily basis. Instead of sending these guys home, we were doing classes, we were training,” Pratt said. “We knew we were coming here. We trained hours and hours and hours every day.”

“We know what to expect and what’s going to happen. There’s a bunch of guys fresh out of basic and AIT,” he added. “We weren’t going to let them be focused on the basic book knowledge of a medic. We knew that it’s far more advanced than that.”

Bryant and Roden have been honored for their hard work and uncommon actions under fire, but if you ask them, modesty is all you’ll get.

Setting the standard

The proper wear of the uniform is sign of discipline and professionalism. It is no different being in a combat zone.



The sleeves on the Army Combat Uniform cannot be rolled under or rolled up at any time. The cuffs on the sleeves are to be fastened at all times.

The ACU trousers must be either tucked in or bloused above the third eyelet of the boot. The only trousers allowed to hang over the boot are the Nomex ACU pants.



The only authorized physical training uniform is the summer PT. Long pants and PT caps are NOT authorized in summer months. Short-sleeved Army grey PT shirts are the only authorized top while tucked in. Tan and organizational shirts are not approved.

While MP3 players are authorized for use in the gym, they must be carried, not worn on the arm or waistband to and from the facility. At NO TIME are they to be used outdoors in ANY uniform.

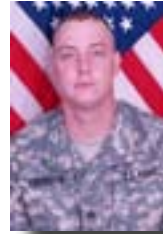


Sgt. Audie Murphy Club Inductees

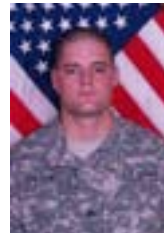
2-12 Infantry



Staff Sgt. Victor Illescas



Staff Sgt. Jeffery Lamoreau



Staff Sgt. Nicholas Gibson



Staff Sgt. Kevin Nettin



Sgt. John Rose Jr.

1-18 Infantry



Staff Sgt. Robby Burns



Staff Sgt. Jason Korlaske



Staff Sgt. Juamada Page



Staff Sgt. Calvin Shingle



Staff Sgt. Anthony Britt, Jr.

1-40 Cav, 4-25 ID

2-377 PEAR



Sgt. 1st Class Donald Cartwright



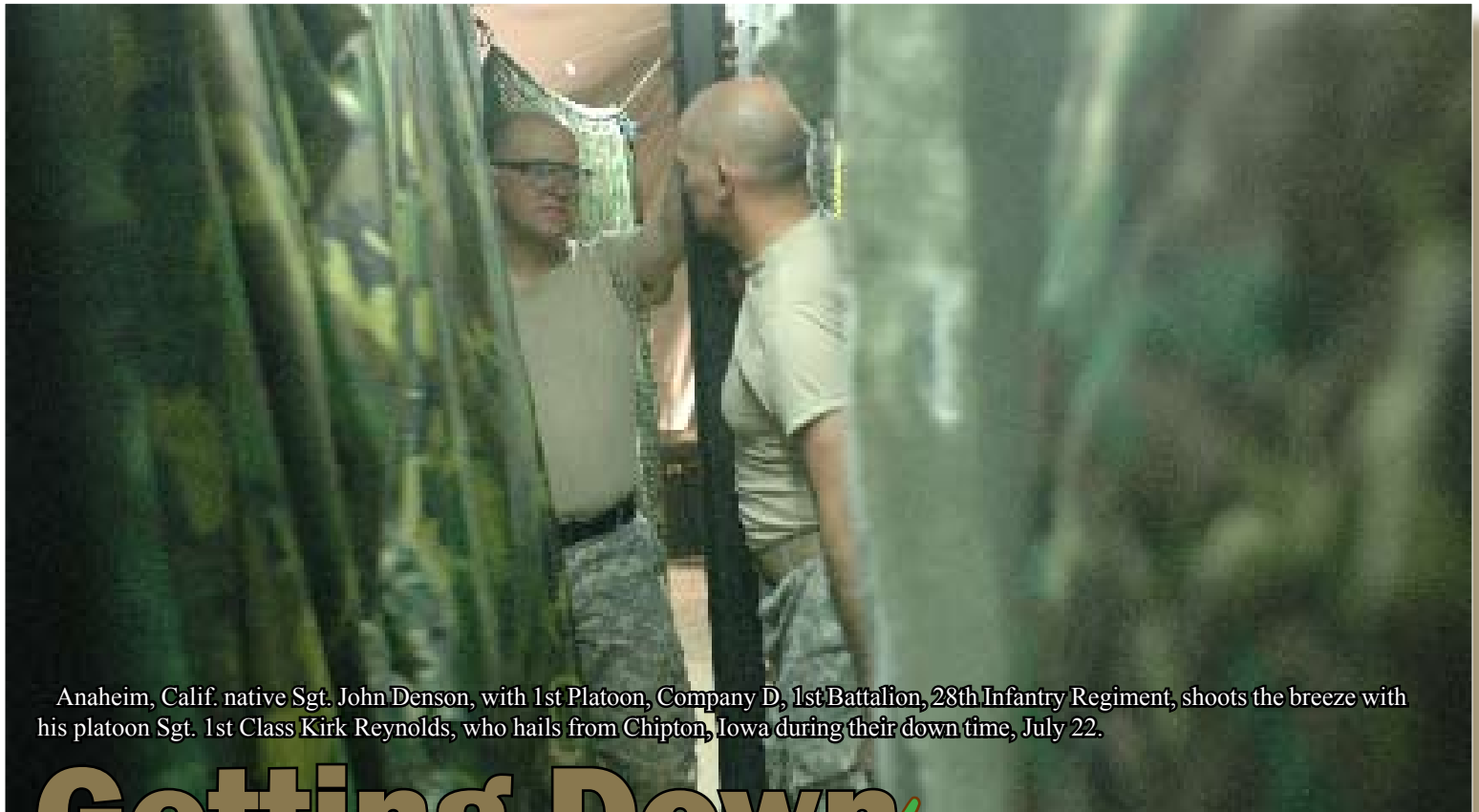
Sgt. 1st Class Scott Suiter



Staff Sgt. Brian Embry



Staff Sgt. John Bailey



Anaheim, Calif. native Sgt. John Denson, with 1st Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, shoots the breeze with his platoon Sgt. 1st Class Kirk Reynolds, who hails from Chipton, Iowa during their down time, July 22.

Getting Down with Destroyer

Black Lions get time off

Story, photos by Sgt. 1st Class Robert Timmons
4th IBCT Public Affairs



After coming off a mission there is work to be done. Then the Soldiers can have time off. Here Pvt. David Pinkham, with 3rd Platoon, Co. D, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment from Bernal, Utah, pours dirt into a sandbag held by Pfc. Ryan Kinic, member of 2nd Platoon, from New Baltimore, Mich. July 22 at Forward Operating Base Falcon.

BAGHDAD – The green tent ruffles as a hot wind blows through Forward Operating Base Falcon, Soldiers of “Destroyer” hunkered down inside. They are not hiding from the wind – they are spending their down time any way they wish.

For the Black Lions of Company D, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, the little “me” time they have is spent unwinding – whether that be watching movies, playing games or just shooting the breeze.

The company patrols the West Rashid restive neighborhood of Bayaa aiming to keep the area, as 1st Platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Kirk Reynolds, a 44-year-old native of Chipton, Iowa, said, “safe and running smoothly.” When not hunting roadside bombs, murderers and other threats to Iraqi peace, the unit calls Falcon home.

Though they live in tents they do the best they can to make it as homey as possible.

“The Soldier makes the best of his time,” said Huntington, Texas native, 1st Sgt. Darrell Snell, the Destroyer’s senior noncommissioned officer. “Because they live in tents, privacy is hard to come by, but they make



Left: Ville Platte, La. native, Sgt. Robert Savant, a squad leader with 1st Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., shows the stuffed animal his wife Lindsey gave him before his first deployment. Behind him is a pillow with his daughters', 7-year-old Julie and 3-year-old Cadence, hand prints on them.

Below Middle: Pictures of Sgt. Robert Savant's wife Lindsey and their two daughters, Julie, 7, and Cadence, 3, adorn the tent wall of the Company D, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, squad leader's portion of his tent.

Below: Houston native Cpl. Neill Hernandez watches a movie during down time July 22 at Forward Operating Base Falcon as a picture of his fiancé Keu Thi Le sits on his desk..



do.”

And they make do.

Behind 12-foot high concrete barriers, the Destroyers live in large green tents separated into small cubicles by ponchos, poncho liners, blankets or what ever they can get to create makeshift walls that give just a little privacy.

“I am getting used to it,” said Cpl. Neill Hernandez, a squad leader with 1st Platoon, who lives with 9 other NCOs in his tent, about privacy. “Us infantry guys aren’t expected to have a lot of space.

“It doesn’t bother me all that much,” the Houston native said. “It would be nice to have more privacy but I can do without it for a little while.”

Though living in a tent for months on end would make most Americans cringe, Hernandez has been provided the creature comforts most in the States take for granted.

His small living space has enough room for a desk, on which sits a picture of him and his fiancé of two years Keu Thi Lee; a computer which connected wirelessly to the Internet allows him to talk online to her and play games with friends.

Though they live on cots, the Destroyers have mattresses, some with sheets other with sleeping bags. One Soldier even has his festooned with a special pillow he received from home.

Along with the pillow, he has a green stuffed animal his wife, Lindsey gave to accompany him on his previous deployment.

Like other Destroyers, Savant cherishes his free time which he uses to catch up on sleep and talk to his family.

“It’s very important to me to talk to my family,” he said. “They are my life. It must have been tough living in a time when there was only letters. I guess I just joined during a time of technology.”

Unfortunately, the closeness of tent life can be grating at times, but having technology around helps ease the rigors of combat.

“It helps out a lot having Internet in the tent,” he said. “It means the Soldier can stay in his own comfort zone and have more privacy when talking online.”

He added that Soldiers get by with what they have and can’t worry about what it’s like to live in a more robust place.

“We have to make do,” he said. “We would like to live in a trailer or barracks, but we have to make do with what we have.”

About the only things Soldiers love more than playing video games and talking to their

families is receiving mail. For Savant he is expecting a care package from his wife.

“She is sending me a box of pictures,” he said with a smile. “She sends me a couple each week.”

A care package delivered to one Soldier can mean a whole bunch of goodies for the platoon, as Soldiers pass around what ever they don’t need out of the packages.

While watching movies and talking to their loved ones through Falcon’s AT&T Call Center may seem mundane it brings joy to the troops until they have to go on their next mission.

“We have to be constantly ready,” Hernandez said. “There are times when we have down time but we may have to go out because another platoon is in trouble. The worst part of down time is getting the word to go.”

This day the Destroyers of 1st Platoon didn’t get the word to go and were able to use the hot Sunday afternoon to unwind and prepare for another day in the toughest sector of Baghdad.

Proud Americans show strength

By 1st Sgt. Robert D. Cook
2nd Bn., 32nd Field Artillery

Photos courtesy of Nikola Sakic, Reuters

So there I was, no kidding, right in the middle of Baghdad when I began to ponder, what is it that I can say or write about for our newsletter that has not already been mentioned? What was out there or what has happened that I can highlight and still bring credit to our hard working soldiers? As I began to drive on with my daily workload of paperwork, I came across the Battalion Commander's "Command Philosophy." What stuck out the most to me were the three words that drive him daily and how he expects the Soldiers to internalize these same three words. The three words were: competence, confidence, and courage. I thought to myself for a moment and realized, our Soldiers are already living by and using these three words.

I believe our Soldiers are very competent. When we first learned of our mission prior to going to the National Training Center (NTC), I had a lot of doubts. Here we were, a new unit still training within our own field of expertise and we were going to have to switch our focus to becoming infantrymen. This required a lot of man hours and a lot of training and retraining, not to mention working closer to our infantry counterparts to acquire information on tactics not common to us. There were quite a few reasons to be doubtful and it had been clearly stated numerous times as we took on this mission.

As we began to go through the training at NTC, the worries lessened just a bit. It seemed as if the training we did prior to departing Fort Riley had paid off some. I mean, we still had areas we needed to work on, but we were able to see how quickly our Soldiers had adapted. Now, as they patrol the streets of Baghdad, they appear to be no different than the infantrymen who once trained us. Sometimes, and even quite often, they

seem to do it better than the infantrymen we see out in Baghdad and on FOB Liberty. Our guys and gals are becoming more and more skillful by the day and are truly a force to be reckoned with, when and if encountered.

The word courage in the dictionary is defined

ger that you are in their city. Daily we send our Soldiers out to gain the respect and trust of people they do not even know in the hope that we will gain an ally or a friend who can help us defeat our enemies. Could you do a thing of this magnitude? Your Soldiers do.

Courage is moving from a semi-secure place into a dangerous city full of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), machine gun fire, rocket explosions, blocked streets, and harsh temperatures well above 110°. Who in their right mind willingly faces such dangers? Your Soldiers do. So, if you were to look at the dictionary definition of the word courage, I will bet it is incomplete because the true definition of courage includes the American Soldier.

Finally, if there is one thing our Soldiers have plenty of, it is confi-

dence. They believe that they are bringing about a change in the area we secure and why not when they see new shops opening and people openly cooperating with us? They watch the black marketers flee the area when their vehicles turn the corner. They hear the residents tell story after story about improved safety, they see more children outside without fear of violence, and they see more families moving home for the first time in months or years.

As our Soldiers ride through the city, they see the trash being picked-up, fences being repaired, and sewage waste and sewage systems being cleaned-up and redone. All of this, a result of their efforts to establish a safe and secure environment. So ask yourself, why not be confident in our mission or our accomplishments? I think that you would be and you would show it with as much pride as do our Soldiers.

They are not the only ones who feel this way ... leaders at every echelon of command talk about the work that our Soldiers do every single day.

The only thing extra I can say of our Soldiers is that they are relentless because they know if they do not do this mission, no one will. We are a field artillery battalion with less than half as many Soldiers as an Infantry Battalion, and yet, we make it happen.



SGT Pearson, 3rd Platoon, Battery A, scans his sector while he pulls security during a patrol.



Pfc. Arnes and 1st Lt. Stidum of 2nd Platoon, Battery B, walk past an Iraqi girl during an evening patrol.

as the "mental or moral strength to venture, preserve, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty." This definition could not even begin to describe what our Soldiers display each and everyday. In fact, I will tell you what courage is. Courage is going across the seas to face an enemy who has no face, an enemy who can be anywhere at all times. Who faces such a thing on a daily basis? Your Soldiers do.

Courage is going into a foreign city to bring peace to its residents. Courage is working in a place, day in and day out, where you encounter different cultures, languages, and people, people displaying the mixed emotions of relief and an-

Rangers

Lead the Way in East Baghdad

Photos by Staff Sgt. Bronco Suzuki/
982nd Combat Camera Company



Pfc. Peter Mikolajewski scans his sector for snipers during Operation Seattle, a combined cordon and search operation with 1st Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st Iraqi National Police Division, in the Khamaliyah area of Baghdad, Iraq on June 27, 2007. Pfc. Mikolajewski is assigned to B Company, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment (4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division) attached to 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. Operation Seattle was conducted in order to locate illegal weapons caches in the Khamaliyah area of Baghdad, Iraq.



Above Right: Pfc. Andrew Reinke, from Cincinnati, assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, scans his sector during a clearing operation in the New Baghdad area of East Baghdad, Iraq.

Right: Staff Sgt. Jose Vera, from Philadelphia, assigned to Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, speaks to a member of the Iraqi National Police during a clearing operation in the New Baghdad area of East Baghdad, Iraq.



Around the Brigade

For siblings it's all in the Dragon Family

Story, by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT Public Affairs
Photo by Capt. Kollin Taylor
4-1 BSTB

BAGHDAD – When Spc. James Myers was returning from a mission one day, he knew he'd see all the familiar faces of his battle buddies from the Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, but he saw one that he didn't expect: his older sister's.

Myers, a mortarman with HHC, 1-18 Inf., and Spc. Anna Myers, a joint network node operator with Company C, 4-1 Brigade Special Troops Battalion, both from Albia, Iowa, are a brother and sister tandem deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad.

James, who deployed in October 2006, said he was surprised to find his sister waiting outside his room.

"No one really found out until...she got here," he said. "It was more



Spc. Anna Myers, a joint network node operator with Company C, 4-1 Brigade Special Troops Battalion, and Spc. James Myers, a mortarman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, both from Albia, Iowa, are currently deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad.

The brother and sister have different duty stations, Schweinfurt, Germany, and Fort Riley, Kan., respectively, but were reunited in Baghdad when Anna deployed with the 4th IBCT in early 2007. The 'Vanguards' of 1-18 Inf. are currently attached to Task Force Dragon.

of a surprise."

Anna, who arrived in early 2007, said deploying was made easier knowing her brother was at the same base she was operating out of.

"Knowing someone close to me was here," she said, "I was excited."

James, who operates out of Coalition Outpost Norris, said having his sister at Falcon while he's at a COP made him worry since he wouldn't be able to be there for her.

"I was more worried than anything else," he said. "I couldn't ever really come around to check on her to make sure she's alright. If something happened I wouldn't be there."

When the Myers' parents found out their children were at the same FOB, they were relieved that they would have each other.

"I think they're happy that she got sent to Falcon because it might not be as tough on her having someone she can go see," James said. "They told me to make sure I look out for her."

Baghdad Lights



Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad play a pick-up game of basketball on the Fourth of July. The FOB is currently occupied by Task Force Dragon of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division out of Fort Riley, Kan. (Smith, 4th IBCT)

PMCS does a body good

By Capt. Allen Hill
610th BSB

BAGHDAD – PMCS is an acronym that spells mission success for the Soldiers of Forward Operating Base Falcon, but ask the Doctors and Physicians from 610th Brigade Support Battalion and they will tell you that it does not just apply to the maintenance checks on our vehicles and equipment. PMCS should be executed on everything that we do in our daily lives while deployed. These preventative measures set a standard for us to live by and ensures that we are taking all the necessary steps needed to stay healthy and safe throughout the rotation.

Physical training and the right amount of sleep helps a Soldier maintain his mental awareness. Company C, 610th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's Physician's Assistant, Capt. John King from Swartz Creek, Mich., said, "Daily physical training is important to keeping the body alert and the mind focused in this environment. A balanced mix of strength training and cardiovascular exercises will help keep the heart healthy and will help avoid fatigue after long hours of work. The right amount of sleep and sleeping when you can will help keep you vigilant and prepared for the next mission."

Maintaining a proper diet and avoiding smoking and smokeless tobacco helps the body function and continue through long hours. "It's about eating the right foods at the right time." That is what Doctor (Capt.) Ross Witters, from Omaha, Neb., said about the importance of a balanced diet. He added, "Because we are in such a rush most of the time, it is easy for us to go in and grab all the fried foods. This type of food can cause the body to slow down as essential nutrients and vitamins are missing. Focusing on a balance of meats, vegetables, and the right amount of dairy products gives the body the energy it needs to burn without building up unnecessary fat."

In regards to smoking, Doc Witter pointed out, "Like any machine, you have to keep the air filters clean. Your lungs are the body's air filter. Smoking clogs up those filters with harmful smoke, toxins, and tar. This leads to the body not functioning as well and eventually breaking down. By maintaining the body with a good diet and avoidance of smoking and other tobacco products, one ensures that the body will continue to function properly, like a well-oiled machine."

Consumption of fluids keeps the body temperature stable and prevents Soldiers from overheating during daily operations. Staying hydrated can be the difference between life and death and is one of the most important measures a Soldier can take with the heat index rising into the 120's. Doctor (Capt.) Brian Derrick from Ellensburg, Wash., talked about the importance of hydration.

"Substituting the body with Rip-Its, coffee and soda contributes greatly to dehydration. In this environment Soldiers need to be consuming copious amounts of water to keep the body fluid. If there is physical activity involved, incorporating an electrolyte replacement drink such as Gatorade, in conjunction with water, will help a Soldier avoid those dangers that come with dehydration."

The practice of having good spiritual habits is what Chaplain (Maj.) Greg Thogmartin from Princeton, Mo., says enables Soldiers to focus on doing what is morally and ethically right. He said, "Prayer, meditation, Bible reading, participation in worship, and the serving and sharing with others is what brings about a balance in our lives and helps us get through those stressful times. All of these help build our mental strength, enable us to make the right decisions, and help up to cope with difficult times."

Preserving combat strength goes beyond the daily checks on vehicles and equipment. For a Soldier to function, he must conduct PMCS on himself and look out for the Soldiers around him.



Joint Security Station Black Lion in the Northwest Rashid District.

Joint Security Stations cut response time

Story, Photos by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - When Gen. David Petraeus visited the Black Lions in the Northwest Rashid District, one of the highlights for the 1-28 Inf. was getting the opportunity to show off their Joint Security Station to the MNF-I commander.

While Petraeus had visited Coalition Outpost Gator in the Doura region, he had never been to a joint security station in the Rashid District.

While there are similarities between what Petraeus saw at the JSS and COP, there are also differences.

The purpose of the JSS is to coordinate activities between American Soldiers and numerous Iraqi Security Forces, as well as civilian assets such as emergency medical services and the fire department.

The COPs that U.S. Soldiers are living in throughout Baghdad serve a more single-minded purpose: to get the troops closer to the Iraqi people.

With troops living so close to the citizens of Baghdad, it allows them to form tighter bonds with the people they're protecting as well as decrease response time to Anti-Iraqi Forces' activity.

Pfc. Kazan Tamer, a member of the 1-28 Inf. personal security detachment from Patterson, N.J., said there were positives and negatives for Soldiers living at the JSS.

One of the good things Tamer mentioned were a better response time to attacks, while the biggest negative is the culinary experience.

"We respond a lot faster to attacks. We're always ready to go at any time," he said. "The canned food is probably the worst thing."

Tamer said the COP's were more company-focused than the JSS, which serves as more of a mini-battalion headquarters.

For Soldiers like Tamer, living conditions are good at the JSS. Tamer said the primary difference between living at a COP and JSS as opposed to Falcon is the level of security, but he still feels safe living at the Joint Security Station.

"(Sergeants of the Guard) are on top of it," he said. "I enjoy being at the JSS more than at the FOB, we're always out there, we're always first or second to respond."

Task Force Vanguard fights terror in West Rashid

Two of the companies attached to the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division have been working hard to secure their respective portions of West Rashid. Here are a few bits from those companies.

Capt. Robbie Johnson Wolfpack Company

This past month we have suffered some great losses. We lost our Wolfpack brothers Cpl Clinton Blodgett, Spc. Joshua Brown, and Sgt. Shawn Dressler to improvised explosive devices. They will live in our hearts forever. Also in our prayers are with Pfc. Justin Hartley recovering from serious injuries in Texas, and Spc. Fien and Spc. (Doc) Scott recovering well in Germany. Our hearts go out to their families and be assured

their sacrifices will not be forgotten nor go unanswered. We will hold dear the wonderful memories we have of our brothers.

Even with these difficulties the men of the Wolfpack have stepped up and taken the lead throughout West Rashid. Wolfpack Company was commended by the Gen. David Petraeus, Multinational Forces – Iraq commander, for actions conducted in northwest Rashid during the past ten months. As you know the company is attached to Task Force 1-28IN Black Lions our brother IID infantrymen from 4BDE (L). We have integrated well with them, our mechanized fire power and experience as professional warriors has been spread throughout the two Task Forces; Wolfpack platoons going where they are needed most.

Our company has seen the addition of two light infantry platoons from Attack and Battle Companies. These two platoons, Wolf Attack and Wolf Battle, have come to the company with a fresh edge and made a name for themselves as fellow Wolfpack soldiers.

Capt. Michael J. Wieskopff Charlie Rock

Everyone knows about where we used live, Forward Operating Base Falcon. However, where we live has been one of these changes. The change has been the construction of COPs, or Coalition Outposts, that more closely link us with our Iraqi Security Force (ISF) counter parts.

Our building plots itself right next to the rest of the ISF build-

ings offering us closer encounters with the ISF and making joint patrols and cultural exchanges more expedient, while keeping your service members safe. Coalition Outpost Carter, collocated with the 2-1 Iraqi National Police Brigade, is the home of many Charlie Company soldiers and almost offers the same comforts as FOB Falcon.

These include running water, elec-

tricity, hot meals, and even Morale, Welfare and Recreation Internet. While keeping life support systems running has been a constant struggle at COP Carter, we are always completing the mission.

While one way we work closer with the ISF through COPs we are also working with them in joint projects to keep information flowing between the Iraqis and the Coalition Forces. To do this 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Battalion has created a Joint Security Station right next to COP Carter to facilitate this.

The JSS is like a 911 center that helps information flow between the CF and Iraqi Security Forces as well as offering a hub for Iraqi local nationals to either give information like hints and tips of where IEDs exist in our area or to get information of how to get essential services fixed near their homes.

While the JSS is performing all of these tasks, since the JSS is collocated with COP Carter we provide security and support for the JSS as well as the BN command center that resides on the first floor of COP Carter.

Besides the JSS and the BN TAC we also provide security and support for the National Police Transition Teams that reside in the same area and work directly with the INP in both advising and training.



Above: Soldiers of Warlord Company patrol the streets of West Rashid.

How to take care of the body



The following article is based on my application of some principles from Stephen Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. It is my attempt to provide some tips for Personal PMCS or "how to take care of business." Some of these things are perhaps easier to think about for once we go back home. My thought is maybe that I get you to think about some things today that will set you up for success down the road.

In the Ten Commandments we are told to "remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." (Exodus 20:8) The emphasis on a day that differs from the normal routine strikes some folks as odd. But, you don't have to think about it too long to recognize its value. The Sabbath principle is a reminder that I can't keep my personal tachometer pegged indefinitely. Every so often I have to back off the gas and slow down at least for a little bit.

Stephen Covey, author of The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People and the man responsible for the definition of synergy that we see and hear so much about in the Army, applies the Sabbath principle in his concept of "sharpening the saw." His basic idea is that if I am to be effective over the long haul I must pay careful attention to four areas of my life. Those areas or what I call the Covey Quadrants are: spiritual, mental, physical,

and relational fitness. "Sharpening the saw" is Covey's way of putting us into a way of thinking about what do I need to focus on when I come to the place where I can back off the accelerator for a little while.

First, I look out for my mental health. This area is about learning and personal growth. Covey suggests that reading good literature and learning to write good letters or keeping journal are avenues toward sharpening the mind. (HINT: writing good letters is also a good way to enhance your relationships). I think this can also include college courses, Army correspondences courses, and any training that sharpens my mind, my critical thinking skills, and my professional abilities. In this environment looking out for your mental health surely includes learning to deal positively with stress. For some of us this means taking the risk associated with letting your friends see the real you or being transparent.

Second, I must work at being physically fit. All of us in the military have special incentives to pursue this one. This pursuit of physical fitness includes: exercise, proper diet, and getting enough rest, which is a challenge in this environment. Seeking some balance in life between work and leisure adds to my physical fitness (much easier to do in garrison than when deployed). A key thought here is that good PT is not enough to be truly physically fit.

Third, Covey places relational and emotional needs together. If my saw is going to be sharp I will have to give attention to my relationships with family and friends. Out of developing and

maintaining healthy relationships I will find my own emotional needs are being met as well.

A way to picture the relational health area is to think of a bank account in the "Love Bank." By giving careful attention to my interactions with my spouse, my children, and my extended family members I can make deposits into accounts that will help to maintain the strength and integrity of each relationship. Those deposits can be made even while we are deployed through cards, letters, and phone calls.

I can make a deposit by remembering significant dates and events. I can make a deposit by gifts that say, "I love you! You are important to me!" The dollar amount spent on the gift is not the issue. The real issue is the thought communicated by it and that does not demand a big price tag.

Finally, I need to practice good spiritual health habits. Those habits can include: prayer, meditation, Bible reading, participation in worship, and the serving and sharing that goes with being part of a community of faith. I would suggest that reading biographies of people of faith and looking to see how they grew spiritually and how they found strength for hard times can be a great way to develop your own spiritual fitness. (HINT: spiritual fitness is about building those inner resources to get through the tough times and no one is exempt from hard times).

By giving attention to these four areas I can "sharpen my saw" – that is who I am as person. I can continue to grow and I can create a glide path for the ongoing refinement of my heart and my character.

FALLEN DRAGONS

NO MISSION TOO DIFFICULT
NO SACRIFICE TOO GREAT

"If you are able, save them a place inside of you and save one backward glance when you are leaving for the places they can no longer go. Be not ashamed to say that you loved them, though you may or may not have always. Take what they have left and taught you with their dying and keep it with your own. And in that time when men feel safe to call the war insane, take one moment to embrace the gentle heroes you left behind."

- Maj. Michael Davis O'Donnell
Dak To, Vietnam, January 1, 1970

Pfc. Andre Craig, Jr.
2-16 Inf. June 25

Sgt. Gianni Joya-Mendoza
2-12 Inf. June 28

Spc. Victor Garcia
1-38 Inf. July 1

Pfc. James I. Harrelson
2-16 Inf. July 17

Sgt. Michael Martinez
2-12 Inf. June 28

Sgt. Shin W. Kim
2-12 Inf. June 28

Spc. Steven Davis
2-12 Inf. July 4

Pfc. Camy Florexil
1-28 Inf. July 24

Spc. Dustin Workman
2-12 Inf. June 28

Sgt. William Crow, Jr.
2-16 Inf. June 28

Maj. James Ahearn
96th CAB July 5

Pfc. Daniel Leckel
1-28 Inf. July 25

Pfc. Cory Hiltz
2-12 Inf. June 28

Pfc. James Adair
1-28 Inf. June 29

Sgt. Keith Allen Kline
96th CAB July 5

BIG BROTHER



Sgt. Stephen Bakich, a team leader with the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from San Jose, Calif., holds an Iraqi child playing with a toothbrush that was a gift from Bakich in southern Baghdad's Rashid District July 12. (Smith/4IBCT Public Affairs)