

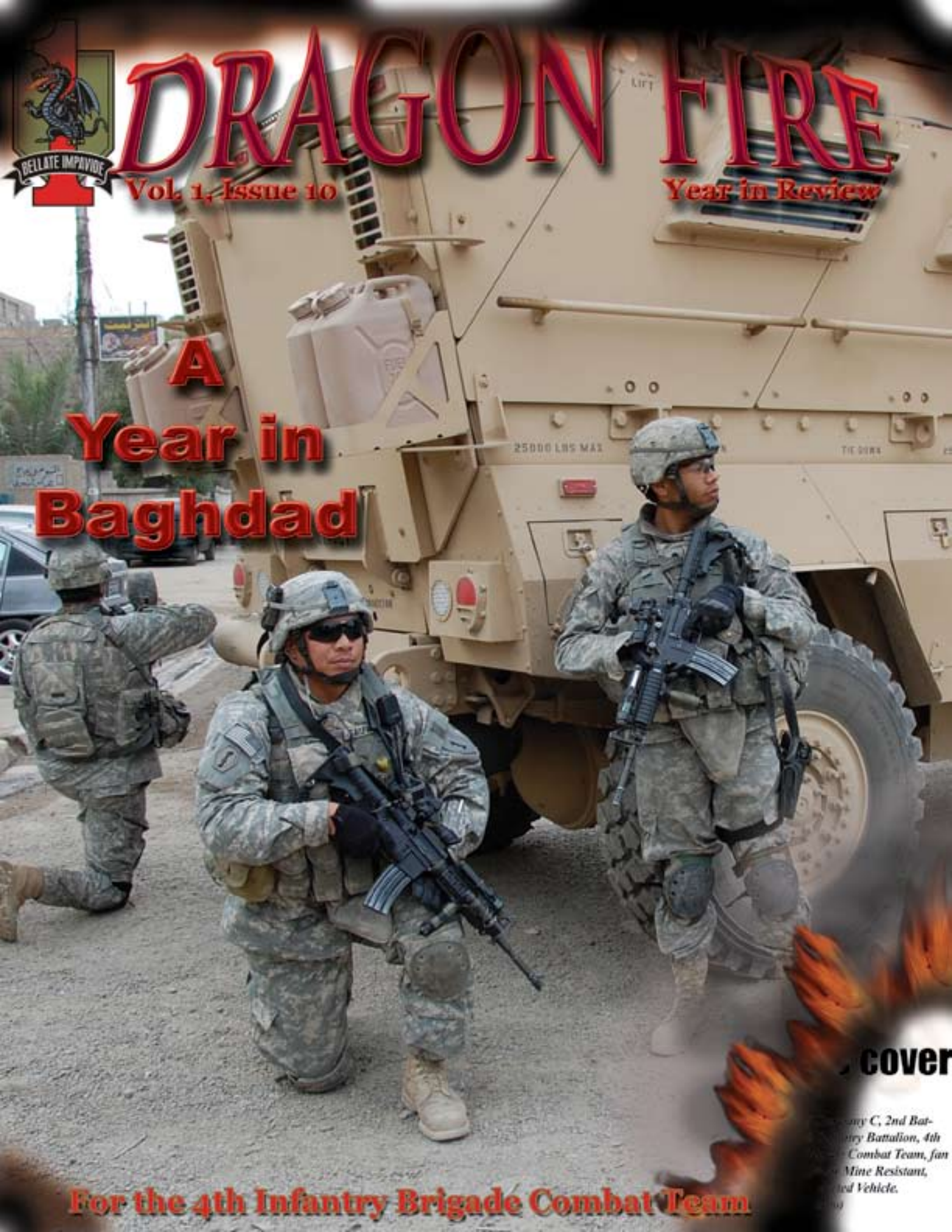


DRAGON FIRE

Vol. 1, Issue 10

Year in Review

A Year in Baghdad



For the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

cover

Company C, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Jan 2005
Mine Resistant, Ambush Protected Vehicle.

FROM THE MOUTH OF DRAGONS

Light at the end of the tunnel

Dragon Brigade Family and Friends:

It is my distinct pleasure to write this note to you as February gives way to March, and we can now start looking ahead to our return to Fort Riley!

Task Force Dragon Soldiers performed magnificently in our 13 months and counting on the ground here in Southern Baghdad, and while we have some time left before we can call our mission complete, I thought I would talk to you about the upcoming redeployment to Kansas and try to address any of the general questions you might have.

You can expect a small, select group of Soldiers to return to Riley in the next few weeks. This advance party is coming back to help prepare for the main body movement which will occur in April. While I wish we could bring the Brigade home en masse, that is simply not possible given the off-setting transition times with our replacement units and the enormous resources required to transport thousands of Soldiers from Iraq to Kansas. However, we will make every attempt to maintain company/battery/troop level integrity, and there will be a steady flow of flights bringing our Soldiers back from the Middle East from the beginning of April until mid-month with a few small exceptions arriving at the end of the month. Your Rear Detachments and Family Readiness Groups will provide details and timelines of your Soldier's flights and anticipated arrival as they become available. I would encourage you to make contact with your respective battalion Rear Detachment if you have not already done so to ensure that all of your personal contact information is up to date and you have the latest news about our redeployment schedules and plans.

Immediately after arriving to Fort Riley, your Soldier will turn in any weapons and sensitive items, and after a small welcome ceremony, will then go on a 48-hour pass.



Col. Ricky Gibbs talks to an Iraqi boy.

Soldiers who have a car stored in the post POV lot will not be allowed access to it for 24 hours as a safety consideration. This will allow them time to get some more rest and begin to readjust to the time change, as well as the different driving conditions in Kansas as opposed to what they have been used to in Iraq.

From the time your Soldier returns from the pass until block leave begins, he or she will be required to attend reintegration training events during the normal work week and not on weekends. Work days will generally consist of medical screening, updating personnel records, dental appointments,

a battery of reintegration briefings, and safety classes designed to seamlessly integrate the troops back into life at home station.

Task Force Dragon Soldiers have made an enormous contribution to our nation's history and the Global War on Terror. I cannot emphasize enough about how much of a positive difference these heroes have made not only for the Iraqis of the Rashid District, but for America's future, and you have every reason to be proud of them.

I would also like to thank all of the families and FRGs for the continued support you have given us throughout our time deployed to Baghdad. We could not have enjoyed as much success here without you behind us every step of the way.

I look forward to seeing many of you in person upon our return to Fort Riley. Should you have any questions about redeployment, I would encourage you to contact your unit Rear Detachment points of contact or visit the various battalion FRG websites set up to assist you with the latest information and changes as they become available.

Duty First, Dragons First!

Col. Ricky D. Gibbs
Dragon 6

GETTING AFTER IT!!

Each month Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Champagne will select a photo of a Dragon Brigade Soldier Getting After It. The Soldier in the photo should cut out the photo and bring it to Dragon 7 to receive a Brigade coin.



Spec. Daniel Nix, a military policeman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, pulls security at the Rashid District Council Hall. He is this month's "Getting After It" winner.



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On the cover

Soldiers of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, fan out behind their Mine Resistant, Ambush Protected Vehicle. (Courtesy photo)



"You have no place to hide."

Dragon Fire

WEST

by Sgt. 1st Class Robert Timmons and Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT Public Affairs

Photos courtesy of 982d Combat Camera Company

BAGHDAD — In neighborhoods across the western Rashid District of Baghdad, terrorists, criminals and other unsavory elements trying to disrupt the city's security are feeling the heat as they are rooted out, detained and their weapons found and destroyed.

Multi-National Division-Baghdad forces conducted neighborhood clearing operations in southern Baghdad in May to safeguard the people of the region from insurgent attacks.

The 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, in conjunction with the 3rd Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, executed

operation Dragon Fire in the Rashid District, taking a more aggressive stand on terrorism in the Dragon Area of Operations.

Operation Dragon Fire West is part of the MND-B overall strategy to stabilize Baghdad as to facilitate a transfer of security from Coalition Forces to the elected Iraqi government.

"We have cleared 21 muhallas, detaining numerous individuals we suspect are leaders in the anti-coalition movement," said Col. Ricky D. Gibbs, Commander, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., at a press conference. "These are men who we believe are not acting in the best interests of the Iraqi people. We have found and confiscated more than 50 weapons caches.

"Everything from assault rifles, to machineguns to RPGs and mortar systems, along with hundreds of mortar, artillery shells,

and bomb-making materials have been taken out of the hands of thugs and criminals and will no longer be used against the innocent citizens of Rashid,” the Harker Heights, Texas native said. “I can honestly say that a countless number of Rashid’s children have been saved from the dangers of these bombs and explosives, thanks to the efforts of the Iraqi Security Forces and our Soldiers.”

To the terrorists he said, “You have no place to hide.”

The word clearing conjures images of Soldiers battering down doors, driving people before them out of their neighborhoods, but that is far from the case. While lightning raids do occur, one will also see Soldiers talking with Imams, sheiks and playing with children.

Lt. Col. Michael McNally, the 4th IBCT operations officer from Necedah, Wisc., said having the Strykers, who can focus on clearing operations, allows MND-B forces to perform otherwise impossible tasks.

“They have no other requirements,” he said. “They don’t have to operate any particular battle space. They can provide hundreds and hundreds of soldiers to help clear that we can’t possibly surge.”

In addition to the numbers, McNally said the Strykers bring a lot of experience to the fight. Operation Dragon Fire is the tenth clearing operation for the Tomahawks, meaning not only are they more experienced, but the Soldiers of the 4th IBCT can learn from them.

“We’re definitely learning lessons from them as far as clearance techniques,” McNally said.

Clearing operations are not just kicking in doors and surprising the enemy, it also entails talking to imams, sheiks and other community leaders to establish a presence in the area.

By talking to the populace, Soldiers clearing the areas get a good idea where the unsavory elements are hiding. Though a level of mistrust still exists getting closer to the communities increases the cooperation between the secured and those providing security.

He added that the troops are very proficient at what they do.

“This is the tenth time they’ve done this,” he said of the Tomahawks. “These Soldiers are becoming extremely proficient at finding caches -- they’ve improved their techniques, and every time they find more stuff to catch the bad guys. They change stuff up so they’re becoming experts at clearing neighborhoods.”

“Every day, 4th Brigade Soldiers learn a lot in sector, whether it’s from Strykers, from the area, from the enemy. This is a learning and growing battlefield and fight. If you don’t learn, the enemy’s going to learn first, and he’s going to kill you.”



Opposite: “Black Lions” with Company B, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry, race up the stairs of a house during Operation Dragon Fire West.

*Top: Cpl. Omar Keys, with Company B, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry, shakes the hand of an Iraqi child during a mission in the Black Lion area of operation.
Middle: An Iraqi girl learns to play “Patty Cake” with a Black Lion.*

Bottom: Cpt. Brian Ducote, Company B, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment (Black Lions) shakes the hand of a prominent Iraqi during operations. Dialogue and diplomacy is a major portion to clearing operations.

Cache find limits enemy arsenal

By Spc. Ben Washburn
4th IBCT Public Affairs

Following a narrow dirt road, flanked by tall grass, palm trees, and reeds on both sides, Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, and 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, attached to 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division uncovered and destroyed a weapons cache and improvised explosive device factory in the thick vegetation of East Rashid on June 10.

Using raw manpower, the two companies worked diligently throughout the morning and day, excavating the site. By mid-day, with the sun high overhead, the Soldiers were exhausted. The Soldiers bodies were covered in sweat, their uniforms soaked through to their body armor. Their faces showed the fatigue that digging for hours on end delivered to their bodies.

The shade of the palm trees provided little relief, as the sun baked the Soldiers in their full combat gear with temperatures well past 100 degrees. Despite the searing heat, and the danger inherent in digging for explosives, the Soldiers pressed on with their mission. Col. Ricky D. Gibbs, the commander of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, and a native of Harker Heights, TX, said he was impressed with their dedication.

"It says a lot for the Soldiers; their training, their discipline, their commitment, the fact that in the heat of the day they were able to find these things, buried under the ground, under the trees."

The hard work of the Soldiers paid off.

Spc. Marquis Dawkins, an infantryman with the Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., guards over 200 five-gallon containers of Nitric Acid that were discovered in the eastern part of the Rashid District of Baghdad.



Left: Petty Officer 2nd Class Matthew Demmer of EOD Mobile Unit 6, Det 12, inspects timers and electronics used in the production of improvised explosive devices. The Floresville, Texas native said Soldiers seized enough wiring, timers, and other equipment to make 300 IEDs. Assisting him is Brentwood, Calif. native, Staff Sgt. Ryan Rezenes, squad leader with the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Below: An EOD technician carries a mortar round. The round was one of the 54 88mm mortar rounds found in the cache.

Bottom: Land mines, mortar rounds, artillery shells, bombs, and propane tanks make up this large pile of explosives found at the site.



They found one vehicle wired as a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device and laden with explosives and three others without; 54 82mm mortars, 27 155mm artillery shells, one 500-pound bomb, 64 anti-tank mines, two 200-pound bombs, one 150-pound bomb, six 100-pound bombs, 30 130mm projectiles, 30 hand grenades, 200 artillery boosters, ten 40mm HEDP rounds, four 60mm mortars, a bag of blasting caps, one rocket of unknown caliber and origin, a bag of booster charges, six bags of propellant, over 700 five-gallon cans of nitric acid used to make homemade explosives; a bag of breaching charges and 15 bags of anti-personnel mines with 100 mines per bag. Also found in the cache was enough wiring and bomb-making material to create more than 300 improvised explosive devices.

In a separate cache near the complex, an additional 125 five-gallon containers of nitric acid were found.

Acting on a tip from an Iraqi citizen, Coalition forces seized the IED factory. Gibbs said the operation sent two messages to the terrorists.

“The first message it sends is that the people are against the bad people who are trying to make Iraq a safe-haven for terrorism. Secondly, it says there are no safe-havens in Iraq. The people of Iraq are going to tell us where they’re at — where all these things are buried. When they do, we’re gonna go find them.”

The discovery of this site was a big victory for Coalition Forces in the Rashid District. Baghdad is now a safer place, and these weapons will never be used against the peaceful people of Iraq, the Iraqi Security Forces, or Coalition Forces.



7 *“It says a lot for the Soldiers; their training, their discipline”*



Lawrenceville, Ga. native Pvt. David Palasek, with Troop A, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, watches as Iraqi citizens mix concrete while they renovate the road median in Doura Oct. 28. Portions of Doura have seen a recent revival after months of fighting with citizens building new sidewalks, installing street lights and cleaning up their neighborhoods.

Economic revival strikes Doura

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

BAGHDAD – Bullet holes attest to the battleground that was this two-block portion of Doura. Just a few months ago, the residents were afraid to step outside leaving their neighborhood riddled with garbage, without power and most of their shops closed.

That was until the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., made a concerted effort to weed out insurgents and put the citizens of the two neighborhoods on Doura's east side on the track to success.

“When we first arrived here there were 10 stores open on the entire street,” said Lt. Col. James Crider, the squadron commander as he toured the peaceful streets with members of the Iraqi media. “There were several attacks, improvised explosive devices every day and no one wanted to cooperate. Initially we stayed on the street to protect the people 24 hours a day, seven days a week, until we became friends with the people.”

On Oct. 27 there were 138 stores open, Crider added.

Staying out on the streets and erecting barriers to prevent gun-



fire from entering the area began to pay off – in more ways than one.

The citizens began to slowly come back outside and a National Police checkpoint was relocated because it was deemed unnecessary to protect that portion of town.

“This is one of the safest places in Doura,” said Pvt. David Palasek, a Lawrenceville, Ga. native serving with Troop A, 1-4 Cav. as he watched Iraqis laying new concrete on the street median. “More people are coming out everyday because they feel safer.”

Once the citizens began to feel more secure the insurgent threat began to ebb.

“Once we began to trust each other and share information the insurgents could no longer hide,” Crider, a native of Hopkinsville, Ky., said. “At the same time we began to work on essential services projects such as trash pick up and street lights. Once they saw they had good power and jobs the area began to look much nicer and the insurgents began to disappear. And things got really good.”

Great strides in the past few months with many projects aimed at helping the citizens were being completed.

“We suffered a lack of security and essential services in Muhallas 838, 840, and 842 until 3 months ago, when the citizens and local contractors were able to complete 22 projects together,” said Dr. Moayaad, who lives in the neighborhood.

Some of the citizens said the area hasn't been as good since before Saddam left power.

“The situation got worse after the fall (of Baghdad) until this moment,” said A'alaal Eldien Salim, a butcher, whose shop was one of the few that remained open during the tough times the neighborhoods endured. “The security gradually started to return to the area because of the presence of Coalition Forces in the area. They are rescuing us from the saboteur's elements. The lighting in the area is important for the shops.”

Salim said he was able to keep in business because of monetary help.

“I had damages in my shop due to other explosions around my shop,” he said. “I received a grant which helped me to fix the windows, but I still need to buy some stuff for the shop like freezer.”

The streets were once empty but for a few stores, now they are vibrant with the activity of a garbage truck making routine rounds to pick up trash; workers placing multi-colored bricks down as a new sidewalk; men pumping iron at the Arnold Gym; children playing and people visiting the Doura Clinic for all their medical needs.



Top: A'alaal Eldien Salim, a butcher, hangs meat up in his shop. He says the area is the best it has been since the fall of Saddam.

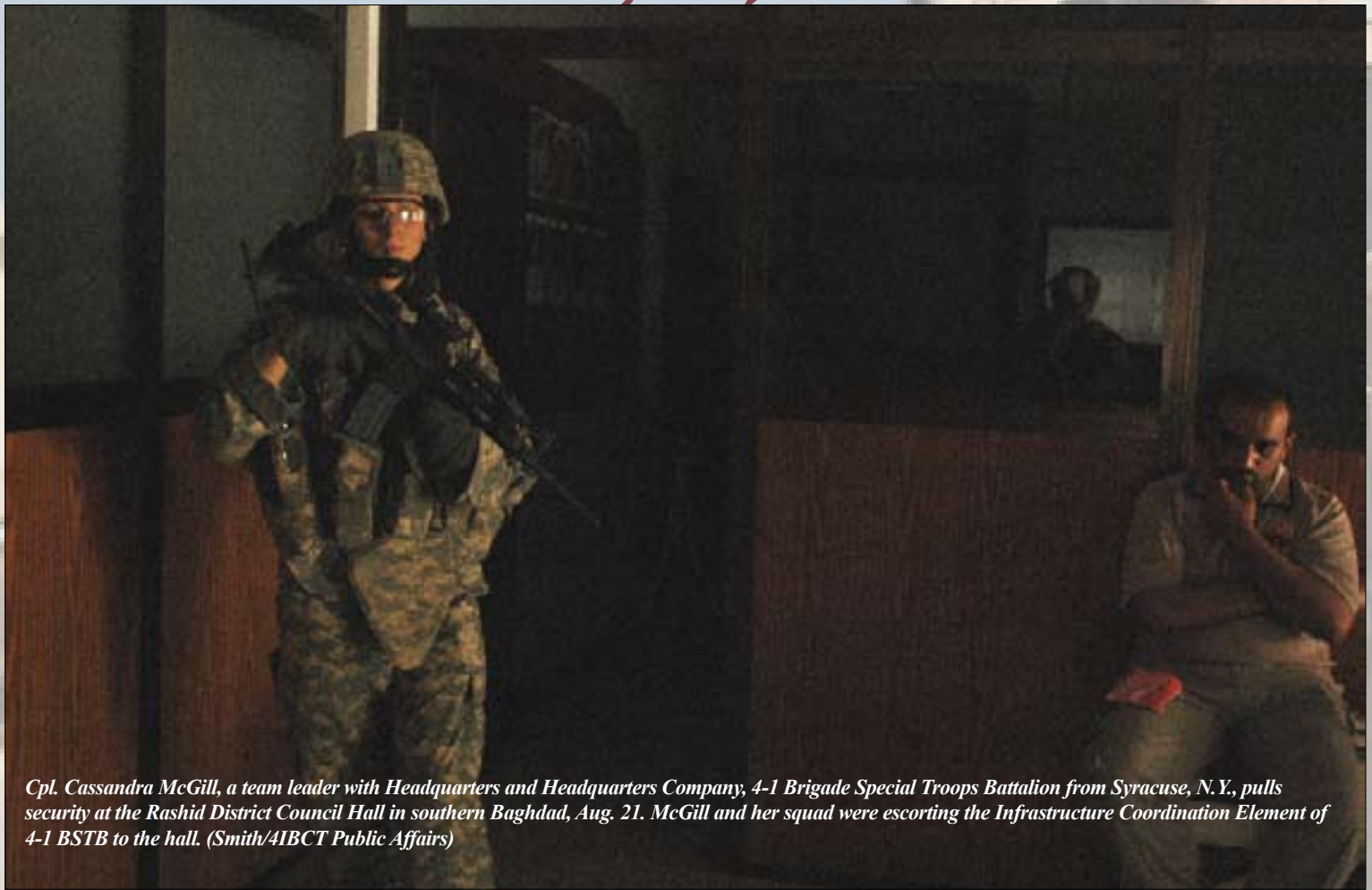
Above: Iraqis mix concrete as they prepare to fix the road medians Oct. 29. Three months before the area was a battleground between insurgents and Coalition Forces.

Left: Dr. Moayaad brings his daughter out to meet Hopkinsville, Ky. - native, Lt. Col. James Crider, commander of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, Oct 28.

Opposite Middle: Sgt. Kenneth Hickman, a vehicle commander with the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, plays with two local boys.

Opposite Bottom: An Iraqi mixes concrete as he prepares to lay more of the colored bricks along the sidewalk Oct. 29. In recent months, Muhallas 838 and 840 began showing an economic revival. Three months before the area was a battleground between insurgents and Coalition Forces.





Cpl. Cassandra McGill, a team leader with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4-1 Brigade Special Troops Battalion from Syracuse, N.Y., pulls security at the Rashid District Council Hall in southern Baghdad, Aug. 21. McGill and her squad were escorting the Infrastructure Coordination Element of 4-1 BSTB to the hall. (Smith/4IBCT Public Affairs)

Female police officers show strength

by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT Public Affairs

A convoy of military police pulled into Forward Operating Base Falcon a little before noon. Most Soldiers would be thinking about getting out of their body armor and into the chow hall.

One Soldier removed a glove, looked at the delicate hand that had been concealed for hours while on the mission, and said, “Man, my nails are broken.”

MP’s don’t usually concern themselves with their nails too much, but this Soldier, Cpl. Cassandra McGill, is a Soldier in a male-dominated field.

Being a woman and being a team leader in an MP unit does not come without challenges, but McGill said that while some Soldiers do look at her as having something to prove, most view her as an equal.

“A lot of men look at a female and they see another Soldier, but it’s all dependent on the person and their past experience with female Soldiers,” the Syracuse, N.Y., native said. “If they’ve had female Soldiers that are trouble-makers or they’ve had female Soldiers that pull their weight. It all depends on how you work also, and if you prove yourself.

“As long as you do what you have to do, it turns out okay.”



Spc. Jena Harris, a medic with the military police platoon of Headquarters, Headquarters Company 4-1 Brigade Special Troops Battalion sits in a vehicle during a mission. (Taylor, 4-1 BSTB)

Spc. Jena Harris, the medic for the MP platoon of HHC, 4-1 BSTB from Medford, Ore., said the way she is treated in a unit comes from the leadership’s example.

“You have to be a woman, but at the same time you have to be tough,” she said. “A lot of the way people are going to treat you comes from the way a squad leader treats you. If they have a tendency to look over you and make the guys pull more weight than you, the men are going to resent you because you’re getting special treatment. Not that we want special treatment, it just happens that way.

“We want to get out there and help those guys, but if they’re not giving us the opportunity to earn our place, then those

guys are going to judge us, no matter what we do.”

While it seems like the female Soldiers are in an unenviable position, both had good reasons for picking their respective jobs.

When McGill joined the Army almost five years ago, she was a cook in a support company of the 15th Forward Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. When she deployed with the unit, she met her husband who was serving with 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Bde., 1st Cav. and she got the inspiration to switch to a more combat-oriented job.

“I knew when I left that unit I was probably not going to

have the same opportunity to be in combat,” she said. “I joined to be an MP because it’s probably the closest I’ll get to be in combat. My first deployment I got to do a lot of stuff alongside the infantry guys. I just had fun and it felt right.”

Harris, who has been serving for two years, said she had always had a desire to join the military, and wanted to have a job with civilian applications.

“I wanted something I could continue on with after I got out of the service,” she said. “I realized coming out of AIT that I wanted to be a line medic, or as close to a line medic as a female could be. I’ve been really fortunate.”

While Harris and McGill have been around for a little while now,

both still feel they have to prove themselves as Soldiers.

“The opportunity that they’ve given me shows that they’re allowing me to prove myself. I have a great team, they do what I say, and they do what they’re supposed to do,” McGill said. “I think I pull my own weight and they allow me to prove myself. There’s going to be Soldiers in the squad that are never going to look at me the same as if I were a male Soldier, but in general the squad has let me prove myself and they accept me as an equal.”

Harris said being viewed the same as her fellow male troops is a rewarding feeling.

“There’s nothing more satisfying than being a woman in a male unit and having them look at you as an equal,” she said.



Tuskers take over in Saydiyah

Story, Photos by Maj. Kirk Luedeke
4th IBCT Public Affairs

As the Soldiers stood at attention in formation on the concrete pad outside the Dragon Brigade headquarters on Forward Operating Base Falcon during their transfer of authority ceremony, the colors of the 4th Battalion, 64th Armored Regiment swayed in the slight breeze.

The colors' most important feature is the Tusker Battalion's regimental crest, which consists of a black elephant head emblazoned on a silver shield with the motto 'We Pierce,' standing out against a sea of yellow cloth and adorned with campaign streamers. All represent a long and proud combat tradition, a legacy of service under fire which now continues with the unit's recent deployment to Iraq from its home station of Fort Stewart, Ga under the command of Lt. Col. Johnnie L. Johnson and Command Sgt. Maj. Rodney L. Greene.

The 64th Armored Regiment originated as the 78th Tank Battalion, activated in January, 1941 and redesignated the 758th Tank Battalion (light) later that same year. What set the unit apart from other tank battalions in the US Army was the fact that it was the first to be organized with African American Soldiers, at a time when army units were segregated formations.

The 758th and its Soldiers served this nation during the Second World War as part of the 92nd Infantry Division, and was inactivated in Italy in 1945.

In 1949, the 758th was renamed the 64th Heavy Tank Battalion, and assigned to the 2nd Armored Division, where it would later see combat during the Korean War with the 3rd Infantry "Marne" Division. After becoming part of the combined arms regimental system in 1963, as the 4th Battalion, 64th Armored Regiment, the Tusker battalion spent more than two decades in Germany with



the 3rd ID as part of the vanguard standing ready to face a potential Soviet threat in Europe.

In 1984, the battalion moved to Fort Stewart, where it joined the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) and deployed to the Middle East in 1990-91 as part of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

The unit's troops put the 3rd Infantry Division patch back on in 1996, when the Marne Division headquarters moved from Germany to Georgia, and it was the Tusker Battalion that led the first 'Thunder Run' into Baghdad in Apr. 2003. The battalion redeployed to Iraq in 2005-06 for Operation Iraqi Freedom III, and has returned in late 2007 for its third tour of duty in the Iraq War.

Today, it is the head of the black, tusked African elephant which stands out most prominently as a proud reminder of the battalion's heritage and ancestry as one of the Army's most storied armored battalions in history.

'Warriors' take over for 'Warriors'



Lt. Col. Timothy Watson, resident of Fort Polk, La. And commander of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, and Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph Montour, the senior non-commissioned officer of 2-4 Inf. who calls San Diego and Amarillo, Texas home, unfurl their battalion's colors during a transfer of authority ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Dec. 24. The "Warriors" of 2-4 Inf. deployed out of Fort Polk, La., assumed responsibility of the Doura region of southern Baghdad from the "Warriors" of 2-12 Inf.

By Spc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT Public Affairs

The 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division assumed authority of the western part of Doura from the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division in a transfer of authority ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Dec. 24.

One battalion of "Warriors," the 2-12 Inf., is returning to Fort Carson, Colo., as another battalion of "Warriors" prepares for full-spectrum operations in the Rashid District after deploying from Fort Polk, La.

The 2-12 Inf. entered Iraq fourteen months ago, "Having been led by love of country," and now are going home.

As 2-4 Inf. prepares to battle the insurgency in their corner of Baghdad, they have one message for terrorists: "Don't tread on me."

Sons of Iraq begin patrolling Saha

by Spc. Nathaniel Smith
4 IBCT Public Affairs

It takes a village to raise a child, a team to win a championship, and, in Baghdad, a combined effort of forces to return a neighborhood to life.

Following that philosophy, Sons of Iraq, with the support of the 1st Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division, assumed responsibility of manning checkpoints in southern Baghdad's Saha neighborhood, Jan. 5.

The Sons of Iraq, SoI for short, are volunteers from within their own neighborhoods who man checkpoints, ensuring the overall security of their own residences.

To Lt. Col. Myron Reineke, the commander of the 2nd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment from Spring Valley, Minn., the benefits of having the extra guards is clear.

"With returning security comes returning essential services," the Spring Valley, Minn., native said.

As an example of the returning essential services, plans are already being made for an electric power substation to be built in the neighborhood to return power to an area where there is none.

Col. Abdul Kadhem, the commander of the 1st Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division, which operates in Saha, said the day was just a step toward a brighter future for the people of the region.

"This is the first day to open this checkpoint, and we had a visit to make sure everything's alright; to see if anything's wrong and if we're able to fix it," Kadhem said. "I hope everything gets better. We're preparing for the second stage, which is returning essential services. We want to bring life back to normal."

The guards who are being entrusted with this task are not just people off the street. Reineke said prospective volunteers go through a thorough screening to ensure they are not criminals who would rather see the region regress than progress.

"We take their names, pictures, fingerprints, scan their eyes so that if they are involved in any kind of illegal activity, we can prove it," he said. "This helps us to keep everybody within the law. Most of them are great Iraqis who want to secure their neighborhoods, but that's how we screen them."

Reineke added that the new security positions provide an opportunity for citizens who want to see their country improve get jobs in other security entities.

"We also want to transition them to jobs within the Iraqi Security Forces so that their salaries can be picked up by the Government of Iraq, they can be given jobs with the government for their future," Reineke said. "These security guard jobs are temporary. We want them to have permanent jobs with the Iraqi Police, National Police, and Iraqi Army."

In an area where citizens have left due to violence and the lack of simple services like sewage and electricity, Kadhem now sees an opportunity to bring them back through the new CIS.



The 1st Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division commander, Col. Abdul Kadhem, talks with one of the Sons of Iraq in southern Baghdad's Saha neighborhood, Jan. 5. Kadhem said the SoI have the full support of his 'shurta,' or police, in fulfilling their



A combination of Sons of Iraq, Iraqi National Police, and Coalition Forces raise their hands together in a symbolic show of unity and celebration for the establishment of the SoI in southern Baghdad's Saha neighborhood, Jan. 5.

"We want to bring back the families that have been displaced. The reason the families left was the security and the services," he said. "To bring those families back, we need the services, but the first part is the security. Now we bring in the people of the area to take care of the issue, and coming from this we're going to be seeing a lot of good services."

Get your read on!

Author Hank Quense has compiled a collection of his published stories. The Tales for the Troops Collection is a free download available to military service personnel world-wide.

The collection contains ten fantasy and science fiction short stories, all told with humor or satire. The collection can be downloaded from the web site: <http://talesforthetroops.com>

Rangers master Kamiliyah

Story, photos by
Sgt. 1st Class Robert Timmons
41BCT, Public Affairs

(Editor's note: This story was originally published as a two-part series about life at Coalition Outpost Bushmaster in Kamiliyah, Iraq.)

KAMILIYAH, Iraq – “Welcome to EFP Airways,” Staff Sgt. Howard Weitzmann, the weapons squad leader with 1st Platoon, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, said as the patrol left Forward Operating Base Rustamiyah in southeastern Baghdad.

The patrol would be heading into one of the roughest parts of the city, known for numerous explosively-formed penetrators targeting Coalition and Iraqi forces, to replace a platoon at Coalition Outpost Bushmaster.

Zigzagging through the bustling city avoiding traffic jams, the platoon was forced to come to a halt only once that trip – traffic outside the local Iraqi Police station was in gridlock as thousands of military-aged men awaited the slim chance they may enter and apply for a job.

“Only about 50 or so will be chosen to go inside,” Weitzmann, the 32-year-old Patillion, Neb.-native said as the throng of jobless men began rushing together like high-school American boys eager to watch a fistfight.

About the same time, an American unit entered the IP compound and Weitzmann’s patrol began moving again.

Entering the small town of Kamiliyah, the pa-



Staff Sgt. Lucas Horn, 23, an infantryman from Portland, Ore., assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division based at Fort Riley, Kan. and attached to 2nd Brigade, 2nd Inf. Div., stands guard at the entrance to the Kamiliyah Neighborhood Council Hall Oct. 12.

trol was welcomed by many children waving and giving “thumbs-up” as the lumbering humvees ambled their way through the narrow litter strewn streets slowly avoiding suspicious piles of debris and the omnipresent overflowing open-air sewage trenches.

Though the troops have been up and down these streets tens, if not hundreds, of times since May when they began manning the COP, the Iraqi children seemed to pay a keen interest in the Ameri-

cans. At one point, a little girl and her sister passed the convoy multiple times as it halted briefly before beginning its journey.

Ultimately, the “EFP Airways” flight had been quiet and the sights of the smiling and cheerful children refreshing. The patrol entered COP Bushmaster will little fanfare except for the smiling faces of fellow Soldiers eager that 1st Platoon had come to relieve them.



Washington, D.C.-native 1st Lt. Edward Boland, 1st Platoon Leader, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, peers around the corner of the Kamiliyah Neighborhood Council Hall Oct. 12.

COP Bushmaster

Nestled near the town's industrial complex, camouflage netting and concertina wire signals the quiet presence of the COP. Home to at least two platoons of Rangers for almost a week at a time, the two-story building is the base of operations for the Company B, "Bushmasters" attached to the 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division based at Forward Operating Base Loyalty.

The unit's parent brigade, the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division based at Fort Riley, Kan., is operating out of Forward Operating Base Falcon, in the Rashid District of the Iraqi capital.

A quiet complex, that has grown quieter yet since Moqtada Al-Sadr called a six-month cease-fire in August, has the basic needs a Soldier could ask for with few exceptions.

There are hot meals twice a day, Internet access, telephones, satellite television, a full-sized gym with free weights and wrestling mats for the Soldiers to unwind after a mission outside the relative safety of the COP's wire.

But, with all the modern amenities the COP has, the lone shower consists of a refillable bag attached to a low ceiling allowing a single Soldier a cramped chance to wash off a mission's grime. Then there are the six wooden latrines, where the contents were pulled out in barrels and with a touch of diesel fuel put to the torch.

Despite conditions that make "Fobbits" cry foul, the Bushmasters to a man stoically agreed they would take COP-life over FOB-life any day. In an era where there is no rear echelon, "Fobbits" are what Soldiers who routinely pound the Iraqi landscape call those who stay on the FOBs.

"It's not that bad," said Spc. Jonathan Turek, a gunner from Houston, slowly smoking a cigarette. "It could be a whole lot worse."

The truck commander of his vehicle agreed.

"It's much better than staying on the FOB and making that trip twice a day," said Cpl. Jacob Price, an red-haired, boyish-looking 21-year-old from Eureka, Calif. The smoke from the duo's cigarettes wafted into the air as they spoke a quiet resolve in their faces.

During the first months at the COP, the Bushmasters had to withstand triple digit temperatures while their air conditioning and electric generators sputtered and died. They said they lost at least ten AC units in the first month alone.

On Sept. 29, their platoon sergeant Sgt. 1st Class James Doster was killed by an improvised explosive device traveling the stretch of road the patrol had just traversed.

"We are rolling with the ball," said Staff Sgt. Jose Vera, a 26-year-old infantryman from Philadelphia. "That is what Doster would want us to do. We are doing the same things as before."

Though solemn in their resolve, the air is ripped



Children crowd the gate near the Kamiliyah Neighborhood Council to get a glimpse of American Soldiers as they guard the building during a meeting, Oct. 12.



Lt. Col. Ralph Kauzlarich, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment commander shakes the hand of the Kamiliyah Neighborhood Council chairman Oct. 12.

apart with laughter around the same time each day. One of things that makes the Soldiers laugh heartily are the re-runs of America's Funniest Home Videos shown on Saudi Arabian television.

With the laughter is the clanking of weights as the Bushmasters strengthen their sinews before their next mission.

A meeting and a night's rest

Soon the Bushmasters would be back on the streets making their presence known to those whom they are there to protect—the Iraqi people.

A few hours after its arrival 1st Platoon was once again cautiously driving through town, this time to the Kamiliyah Neighborhood Council Hall where Capt. Jermaine Hampton was scheduled to meet with the council chairman about current issues affecting the village.

"Looks like it will be a long meeting," said

1st Lt. Edward Boland, 1st Platoon Leader as he stood guarding the front door of the bustling hall. Four sheiks in traditional dress had entered the complex, where locals arrive for everything from medical care to resolving business issues.

The troops had fanned out in their humvees outside the complex walls, while others went inside for added protection.

"There is a convoy approaching," crackled a voice on Boland's radio.

Boland said Ranger 6, or Lt. Col. Ralph Kauzlarich, 2-16 commander was arriving for face-to-face talks with the sheiks.

Inside the large, well air-conditioned room on the second floor, Kauzlarich and Hampton sat across from the sheiks, with the chairman sitting behind his desk under an Iraqi flag between the two as if a moderating a political debate.

After initial pleasantries, Kauzlarich told the sheiks bluntly, "We have captured these three individuals - they are bad men ... We have had numerous people tell us they were bad."

The tribal elders listened intently and asked small questions, but to a man they nodded in agreement when Ranger 6 said a contractor scheduled to do work in the town was fired because he failed to work in a manner timely enough to help their people.

Downstairs in local children, amused by the heavily-armed Americans began to congregate at the gate straining to get a glimpse or even maybe a treat from the strangers.

Soon the meeting would end, and the sweat-drenched Soldiers were on their way back to their base for much needed rest and some hot chow.

As the sun began to sink into the dust on the horizon, the Soldiers found out why the meeting took as long as it did – there would be no night mission that evening in order to let the sheiks maintain tighter order over their people.

October 11 started like any summer day at a beach town in Southern California – warm and overcast. It wouldn't be until afternoon when the heat of the sun would scorch the clouds away and the sand exposed brightly in golden reflection.

But there wasn't going to be any frolicking in the surf today. Instead, the Bushmasters would be patrolling the increasingly calm yet dangerous streets of this small neighborhood in southeastern Baghdad.

After an unexpected reprieve from a mission the previous night, the Bushmasters of 1st Platoon were ready and ventured out into the quiet town for a two-fold mission: check the town's water supply and check the industrial area for a reported weapons cache.

"We don't get blown up or shot at that much anymore," said Cpl. Jacob Price, an infantryman from Eureka, Calif. "The sheiks are starting to rein in their people."



Cpl. Jacob Price, an infantryman with 1st Platoon, Company B, 2nd Bn. 16th Infantry, stands guard as fellow "Bushmasters" search a home in Kamilitay, checking to see if the house had running water. It did.

Even through the eerie calm, the Bushmasters will uncoil and show the people they are still there through various day and night patrols.

Four corners and a dry hole

Schumann, t, led the platoon straight out of the semi-comforts of COP Bushmaster down a road nearly a kilometer, stopped and immediately dismounted near a school.

As the day before, the children began to gather to get a glimpse of the heavily-armed Americans bottled up in heavy armored vehicles or quite possibly be the beneficiary of a Soldier's good will.

Schumann entered the school to take a sample of the water in the area just as a flood of cheerful school girls exited.

Water samples were being taken at various points around the perimeter of town to judge the health of its water supply.

After a few minutes the patrol was weaving through the narrow streets, slowly driving through traffic and waiting for a backhoe that was digging in an intersection to move.

The convoy stopped briefly, another sample taken and the convoy moved again until the patrol stopped and Soldiers began to dismount.

"Look for a house with running water," Schumann ordered through the radio as Price, Pfc. Scott Francis Scutari, a 31-year-old infantryman from Long Island, N.Y. and others began testing the locks on nearby courtyards for entry.

"This one's locked," Scutari said just as Schumann and Price found one open across the street and entered.

Politely the Soldiers wrapped on the front door and patiently waited until a mother and child opened the door.

"Salaam Alakum," Scutari said with a smile to the mother and child, who returned the smile and quietly stepped aside as the Bushmasters stealthily searched the house.

"This one has running water," a Soldier called out somewhere in the

house and after doing a cursory check of the residence the troops left as quickly as they arrived.

The next part of the mission would last a bit longer.

The sun had finally burned off the haze as 1st Platoon drove around mountains of scraps that in another time and place would be considered abstract art; near ramshackle tan brick walls with rusted, locked gates protecting reddish-brown steel doors, parked and began searching for what intelligence said could be a sizeable cache of weapons. If it wasn't for dogs barking and new locks on the doors the place seemed deserted.

"We went looking for 30 to 300 107mm rockets," Price said afterwards. "It's a little easier to find something like that – there are not a lot of places you that can hide it."

Armed with bolt cutters, the troops began a methodical clearing of the industrial block with knock on each door then if no answer the locks would be destroyed and the troops entered.

Building after building the Bushmaster searched in vain for the cache. Unlike Alice in Wonderland they didn't find anything at the end of the rabbit hole. It was dry.

The troops kept searching even though most of the near empty buildings didn't have the space to conceal a sizeable cache. But they did find Iraqis working hard either packaging dates or powder coating hot water heaters who barely acknowledged the inspectors and kept working.

"We have been here many times," Price said. "We come here from time to time, but don't always find caches. We go places to show our presence and to let the locals know we are there."

Even though they have been to the complex many times, it doesn't make it any less stressful.

"You are always apprehensive until you finally go in the door," Price said.

"You are always apprehensive until you

With sweat dripping off the brows the temperatures inching toward 100 degrees Fahrenheit, the platoon methodically neared the end of the mission. But there was still one more shop to inspect.

When Schumann, Price and a few others stepped through the courtyard, they encountered fresh metallic scraps littering the courtyard and an grey-haired old man and his family who smiled at the Americans and shook their hands with an excitement reminiscent of meeting long lost relatives.

The Soldiers gave a cursory look over the man's tin-cutting wares and left as quickly as they arrived.

Ghosts in the darkness

Intelligence arrived that afternoon of a possible high-value target in the vicinity and the Bushmasters began planning a lightning strike to snatch him up.

With the clock striking the first few ticks of Oct. 12, the platoon doused the humvee lights and a squad led by Schumann entered the block on foot.

Like ghosts afraid of the light, the squad stealthily crept from shadow to shadow looking for the house intelligence pointed to: a two-story residence with a yellow gate with a courtyard.

Houselights up and down the block cast an



Spc. Christophe Goodrich, left, an infantryman from San Diego, and Spc. Matthew Stern, a medic from Phoenix, both with 1st Platoon, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., sort through papers found in an Iraqi home, during a night raid Oct. 13.

eerie glow as the squad approached.

A few meters before the suspect house, the patrol walked past an empty vehicle on the right side of the road and met a heavy-set Iraqi leaning up against a wall taking in the night sky. Schumann immediately exchanged pleasantries with him and quickly enlisted his services.

"Do you know where this man lives?" the squad leader asked politely.

No, the man insisted.

"What about this address?" Schumann said

showing the man a map. With a slight hand gesture the man indicated it was the first home on the right. As part of the squad searched a house four doors up the road, Schumann and others quickly tested the gate to find it locked.

Three Soldiers scaled the gate and knocked on the door. A middle-aged man answered and quickly went outside to unlock the gate. Soldiers inspected his house and only found the man's identity paperwork. It was the wrong man.

Schumann talked with the man and with a smile and handshake the Soldiers left.

"We had vague intel," Price said later. "People may be upset at other people for what ever reason and reported them."

No matter if it was another dry hole or not, Boland, said it helped keep his troops sharp.

"It was good practice for the guys," he said. "You might scare some people in the house; it makes them mad, but they see you are going after bad guys."

With daylight still a few hours off, the Soldiers crawled into their bunks and slept until the smell of hot breakfast and preparation for their next mission would wake them up.



Cpl. Jacob Price, an infantryman with 1st Platoon, Company B, 2nd Bn. 16th Infantry, peers out a window during clearing operations of the Kamiliyah industrial area as he looks for a cache of rockets. The Eureka, Calif. native's unit is part of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., but is attached to 2nd Brigade, 2nd Inf. Div. during its current deployment.

go in the door" : Cpl. Jacob Price

Team Eagle joins Pho

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

Soldiers' ability to provide basic first aid to each other before reaching a medical facility has saved countless lives over the course of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Soldiers of Company C, 610th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division have teamed up with the 7th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division Transition Team, also known as 'Team Eagle,' to teach a Combat Life-saver's Course at Joint Security Station Doura in southern Baghdad, providing the INP's with the skills necessary to do the same.

The course, which is four days long, is scheduled to complete its first rotation Nov. 29.

Staff Sgt. Todd Young, the 7-2 NPTT medic from Columbus, Ohio, said the course is going to save lives.

"At every checkpoint, they should have a CLS bag. Somebody gets shot or somebody gets injured, that person's going to need to be treated," Young said. "We've found out from past experiences, if you stop the bleeding you have an 80 percent better chance of saving that person's life. If we can get everybody at every checkpoint to be CLS qualified, we can save lives better."

The course covers patient assessment, identifying injuries, airway management, splinting, vehicle extraction, bleeding control and intravenous therapy over four days and is scheduled to take place once a month.

Young added that having 'shurta,' Arabic for police, equipped with these skills is better than their prior routine of simply putting the wounded in a truck and driving to the nearest hospital, often resulting in death before the wounded could get treatment.

Spc. Christopher Lindsey, an instructor with Co. C, 610th BSB from Houston, the course is key to ensuring the wounded reach the level of care they need.

"Through these basic life-saving interventions we're teaching it's going to greatly increase the chances of their people staying alive," Lindsey said.

Sgt. Jason Kun, a combat medic with Co. C, 610th BSB from Silver Lake, Kan., said even though the course is similar to the U.S. Army's course, there were parts changed to fit challenges the INP's will face in Baghdad.

"We took standard American CLS and tried to tailor it and fit it with Iraqi cultural considerations and the education level," Kun said. "Certain areas that we focused on in American society, we shy away from and we'll delve more into practical and improvised techniques a lot more."



One of the main things that had to be changed, Kun said, was the use of dressings. Since the INP's don't have as easy access to specialized dressings, the instructors had to focus more on field dressings and basic first aid.

Lindsey, who said he has a passion for teaching, said the students' collective attitude makes the class easier and more fun to instruct.

"They want to be here and they want to learn; that's excellent," he said. "If you get a class of people that don't want to be there or don't take it seriously, it's very hard to give them that knowledge if they don't want it."

Kun, who has prior experience training Iraqis with Military Transition Teams in Al-No'a' amaniya, said the students get more out of the course be-

"If you stop the bleeding you have an 80 percent better chance of saving that person's life."

Phoenix to train Iraqis



Above: An Iraqi National Policeman practices applying a bandage to an exit wound during the Combat Lifesaver's Course at Joint Security Station Doura, Nov. 27.

Top: An Iraqi National Policeman practices applying a bandage to an Iraqi Army soldier during the Combat Lifesaver's Course at Joint Security Station Doura in southern Baghdad, Nov. 27.

Left: Spc. Christopher Lindsey, a medic with Company C, 610th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Houston, demonstrates the proper method to insert a nasal trumpet during the Combat Lifesaver's Course at Joint Security Station Doura in southern Baghdad, Nov. 27. The tool is used to prevent the tongue from falling into the airway and blocking it.

Across Top: Sgt. Jason Kun, a medic with Company C, 610th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Silver Lake, Kan., demonstrates the proper method to evaluate a casualty during the Combat Lifesaver's Course at Joint Security Station Doura in southern Baghdad, Nov. 27. Kun has worked with Military and National Police Transition Teams in Al-Noa'amaniya to train Iraqis on basic first aid.

Across Bottom: Policemen with the 7th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division practice applying a bandage to a casualty at Joint Security Station Doura in southern Baghdad, Nov. 27.

cause of the rapport the instructors have built with their pupils.

"There's been a comfort level that if they have a question they know they can ask, and they're not going to be looked down on for not knowing the answer," he said.

Young, a reservist who is tasked to the 7-2 NPTT from the 256th Combat Support Hospital based out of Columbus, Ohio, said ultimately, 'Team Eagle' would like to have Iraqis instructing the CLS course.

"That's going to be the goal. With the Warrior Leader's Course, I teach bleeding control, and I have my Iraqi counterpart there watching. During time off, we'll work so he can be teaching it, and he'll work with the CLS also; maybe start watching and then assisting and work his way up to teaching when he feels comfortable."

Lindsey said his part in instructing the course has been one of the most gratifying experiences of his deployment.

"I'm very excited about doing this. This is why we're here: to help the Iraqi people during this transition phase," he said. "You don't really get to do this

in a (troop medical center). I'm actually elbow-deep in helping. It really is an awesome experience."

ent better chance of saving that person's life."



Miami native Sgt. Danil Ramirez, a cannon crew member, with Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., searches a prospective recruit before allowing him into the Iraqi Police Auxiliary recruitment drive in Hateen, Nov. 17. More than 175 volunteers were processed during the Battery A sponsored drive.

Iraqis Line Up To Join Auxiliary

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

It has been a long, hard deployment for the Soldiers serving in Iraq. Threats of improvised explosive devices, snipers and chaos seemed to hide around every corner.

Yet through it all, the rates of attacks against Coalition Forces and their Iraqi counterparts are dropping. *The Associated Press* reported U.S. commanders as saying violence is down 55 percent since the surge of 30,000 troops arrived in the city.

Is this decrease a matter of more Soldiers patrolling the troubled streets of the Iraqi capital or is it because more Iraqis are standing up to the extremists to take their part and end the cycle of violence?

Amid the myriad reasons for the decrease, one thing is certain; Iraqis are lining up by the hundreds to join Iraqi Police Auxiliary forces.

These forces, though paid less than Iraqi Policemen and may one day become full-fledged police officers, are tasked with protecting their own neighborhoods or mu-



hallahs.

On Nov. 17 and 19, troops from 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment along with their Iraqi Security Forces brethren held recruitment drives to sign

up these volunteers in the Hateen and Yarmouk neighborhoods.

At the Nov. 17th drive, sponsored by Battery A, over 175 recruits volunteered, while at the Battery B drive in Yarmouk, 47 went through the recruitment.

"It is extremely important," said Dana, Ky native Sgt. Michael Webb, a petroleum supply specialist from Battery A, 2nd Bn. 32nd Field Artillery, who manned the final out processing station at the event. "We are giving back to the Iraqi people. It is very important for them to help take care of themselves."

During the drives, the recruits had to pass through a security checkpoint, a brief medical screening, a biometrics check, an interview with local ISF commanders and a physical fitness test before they could see Webb to get their final processing.

"This was planned for a couple weeks," the 32-year-old said. "We have been able to move people through efficiently through good communications."

He added that there was a good deal of interpreters at the event which helped speed it along.

One of the most important steps in the process was



ensuring no recruits had a suspicious background.

“We do biometrics checks to see if they come up on any list,” said Staff Sgt. Steven Guiffre, a military policeman with the 401st Military Police Company who oversaw the taking of fingerprints and retinal scans. “This helps eliminate those you don’t want as a policeman.”

The data gathered is put into a computer database which checks to see if the person is who they claim to be and if they are suspected of criminal activity.

The Waterbury, Conn. native whose unit helps train Iraqi police officers said it is important for Iraq to have a good strong police force.

“You don’t have a totally free society with the Iraqi Army pulling security,” he said. “Let the police take care of the towns and let the Army take care of the country.”

To ease any sectarian tensions, any male over the age of 17 was allowed to volunteer regardless if they were Sunni or Shia.

“Everybody is allowed to volunteer as long as they live in the area,” said Bloomington, Ind. native, Staff Sgt. Patrick Whaley, the battalion’s Civil Military Operations platoon sergeant. “This is a good step in the right direction for the Mansour area, especially Hateen. It gets the locals working with the (Iraqi Security Forces) as they police their communities.”

The 37-year-old father of a 19-year-old private said during the Hateen recruitment drive that a few months ago the idea of this many people showing up would have been laughed at.

“We had over 175 people show up today,” he said. “Six to seven months ago you wouldn’t even have had half that many.”

While the numbers seem small compared to larger neighborhoods like Saydiyah or Doura where the numbers reached up into the high hundreds, the IPA will soon hit the streets to help rid the city of criminals.

Top left: Cordova, Md. native Spc. Shane Osterman, a military policeman with the 401st Military Police Company out of Fort Hood, Texas, scans the biometric data of an Iraqi Police Auxiliary recruit during an IPA recruitment drive Nov. 17 in Hateen.

Top right: Bloomington, Ind. native Staff Sgt. Patrick Whaley, the Civil Military Operations platoon sergeant directs an Iraqi Police Auxiliary recruit to the next station during an IPA recruitment drive in Hateen, Nov. 17.

Above left: Dana, Ky native Sgt. Michael Webb, a petroleum supply specialist from Battery A, 2nd Bn. 32nd Field Artillery, watches recruits do pull-ups through a cast-iron gate.

Above right: An Iraqi Policeman holds his fist down to insure an Iraqi Police Auxiliary recruit does proper push-ups during the physical fitness portion of IPA recruiting in Hateen, Nov. 17.

Opposite bottom: Miami native Sgt. Danil Ramirez, a cannon crew member with Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, walks through the more than 175 volunteers waiting for a chance to be processed as Iraqi Security Auxiliary, Nov. 17 in the Baghdad neighborhood of Hateen.

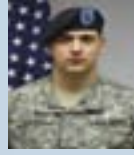
Dragon Fire Fallen Dragons



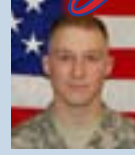
Sgt. Robert M. Carr
2-12 Inf., March 13



Pfc. Walter Freeman, Jr.
2-12 Inf., April 4



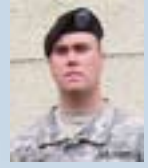
Pfc. Steven Walberg
1-4 CAV, April 15



1st Lt. Ryan P. Jones
4-1 BSTB, May 2



Sgt. 1st Class Robert Dunham
1-3-1 NPPT May 25



Sgt. Shawn Dressler
1-18 Inf. June 2



Spc. Mario Guerrero
1-18 IN, March 17



Spc. Daniel A. Fuentes
1-28 Inf., April 6



Sgt. Mario Deleon
1-18 IN, April 16



Staff Sgt. Felix Gonzaleziraheta
1-18 IN, May 3



Staff Sgt. Russell Shoemaker
1-3-1 NPPT May 24



Pfc. Joshua Brown
1-18 Inf. June 2



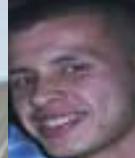
Sgt. Wayne Cornell
1-28 IN, March 20



Pfc. Damian Lopez
1-18 IN, April 6



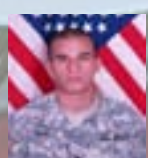
Pfc. Aaron Genevive
1-4 CAV, April 16



Pfc. John D. Flores
1-18 IN, May 3



Spc. Clinton Blodgett
1-18 Inf. May 26



Pfc. Justin Verdeja
2-12 Inf. June 5



Pfc. Stephen Richardson
1-28 IN, March 20



Spc. Ryan Dallam
1-18 IN, April 6



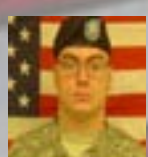
Pfc. Lucas Starceovich
1-18 IN, April 16



Spc. Robert Dixon
1-4 CAV, May 3



Pfc. Joshua Moore
1-18 Inf. May 30



Pfc. Shawn Gajdos
2-16 Inf. June 6



Sgt. Curtis E. Glawson, Jr.
610 BSB, March 20



Cpt. Anthony Palermo
1-18 IN, April 6



Pfc. Jason Morales
1-28 IN, April 18



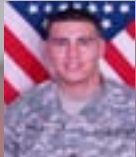
Pfc. Aaron Gautier
2-23 IN, May 17



Sgt. Bacilio Cuellar
1-18 Inf. May 30



Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Sutton
2-1-2 MITT June 6



Sgt. Joe Polo
2-12 Inf., March 29



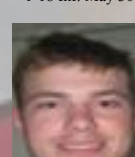
Pfc. Jay S. Cajimat
2-16 IN, April 6



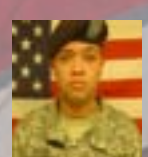
Pfc. Christopher North
1-4 CAV, April 21



Spc. Jonathon Hamm
2-23 IN, May 17



Spc. James Lundin
1-18 Inf. May 30



Pfc. Cameron Payne
2-16 Inf. June 11



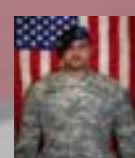
Pfc. Derek A. Gibson
2-12 Inf., April 4



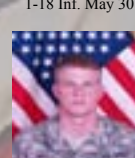
Pfc. Kyle Bohnsen
2-12 IN, April 10



Spc. Astor Sunsini-Pineda
4-1 BSTB, May 2



Pvt. Oscar Saucedo
1-28 Inf. May 22



Pfc. Matthew Baylis
2-12 Inf. May 30



Pfc. William Johnson
1-4 Cav. June 12

“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



Pfc. Michael Pittman
1-4 Cav. June 15



Pfc. Cory Hiltz
2-12 Inf. June 28



Sgt. Keith Allen Kline
96th CAB July 5



Spc. Chris Neiberger
1-18 Inf. August 6



Staff Sgt. Courtney
Hollinsworth
1-4 Cav. September 9



Cpl. Gilberto Meza
3-2 SCR October 6



Staff Sgt. Michael Bechert
1-18 Inf. June 15



Giann Joyamendoza
2-12 June 28



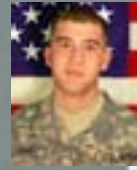
Pvt. James Harrelson
2-16 Inf. July 17



Cpl. Sean Hensel
2-23 Inf. August 14



Pfc. Aaron Walker
3-2 SCR September 18



Spc. Frank Cady III
4-1 BSTB October 10



Pfc. David Wilkey
1-28 Inf. June 18



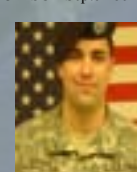
Sgt. Shin Kim
2-12 Inf. June 28



Pfc. Camy Florexil
1-28 Inf. July 23



Staff Sgt. Jason Butkus
1-28 Inf. August 30



Spc. Joshua Reeves
2-16 Inf. September 22



Spc. Kenneth Iwasinski
2-12 Inf. October 14



Pfc. Jeremiah Veitch, Jr.
2-12 Inf. June 21



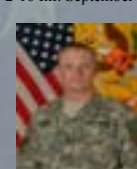
Sgt. William Crow
2-16 Inf. June 28



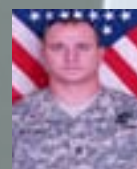
Pfc. Daniel Leckel
1-28 Inf. July 25



Pfc. David Lane
2-16 Inf. September 4



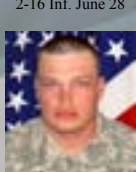
Sgt. Robert Ayres
3-2 SCR September 29



Staff Sgt. Jarred Fontenot
2-12 Inf. October 18



Sgt. Anthony Dahl
2-23 Inf. June 23



Pfc. James Adair
1-28 Inf. June 29



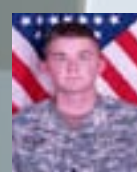
Spc. Cristian Rojasgalleo
2-3 Inf. August 2



Sgt. Joel Murray
2-16 Inf. September 4



Sgt. 1st Class James Doster
2-16 Inf. September 29



Spc. Brynn Naylor
2-12 Inf. Dec. 13



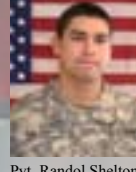
Pfc. Andre Craig
2-16 Inf. June 25



Spc. Victor Garcia
1-38 Inf. July 1



Staff Sgt. Fernando Santos
2-3 Inf. August 2



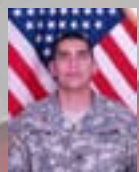
Pvt. Randol Shelton
2-16 Inf. September 4



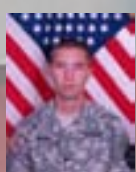
Spc. Avealalo Milo
2-2 SCR October 4



Cpl. James Gudridge
4-64 Armor, Jan. 6



Sgt. Michael Martinez
2-12 Inf. June 28



Pfc. Steven Davis
2-12 Inf. July 4



Spc. Eric Salinas
2-3 Inf. August 2



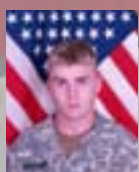
Spc. Rodney Johnson
1-4 Cav. September 4



Cpl. Jason Marchand
3-2 SCR October 5



Spc. Duncan Crookston
2-16 Inf., Jan. 25



Spc. Dustin Workman
2-12 Inf. June 28



Maj. James Ahearn
96th CAB July 5



Spc. Braden Long
1-4 Cav. August 4



Sgt. 1st Class David Cooper
2-23 Inf. September 5



Sgt. Joseph Milledge
3-2 SCR October 5



Spc. Orlando Perez
2-2 SCR, Feb. 24

Then and Now

