

THE RAIDER

Tribe

May 2010

Vol. 1, Issue 8



"To The Objective!"

RAIDER 6

COLONEL JOHN NORRIS

4th SBCT COMMANDER



Raider Tribe,

As our deployment progressed into its eighth month, it was fitting that we recognized, remembered, and took time to reflect on the sacrifices, dedication and devotion of the Soldiers and families of this great nation.

Our country has fought many wars since its Declaration of Independence to protect the American people and help free oppressed citizens around the world.

Memorial Day had extra meaning being in Iraq. It brings the memories to the front of your mind while you think back over the sacrifices the Soldiers of this brigade have made the last seven years.

We reflected about the friends, battle buddies, Soldiers and leaders that we have lost during this time of war, and remembered those that sacrificed before us to make America the country it is today. They were brave Soldiers who gave all, so that the people of our nation and the nations we support can enjoy freedom and peace that our enemies otherwise would deny.

We also recognized another type of sacrifice; selfless service to others. The Brigade recognized the contributions of volunteers to our success this deployment.

A volunteer luncheon was held to celebrate the dedication and hard work that volunteers have given to this brigade. Lakewood Mayor Doug Richardson, one of our community partners

in Lakewood, was the guest speaker and gave inspiring words to the volunteers. Volunteers were honored with silver Stryker charms to commemorate the countless hours they have given to the Brigade. The pictures we received downrange show a first class event, and I would like to thank all who assisted in putting it all together.

Looking forward, we are approaching the end of our deployment.

At first glance, four months seems like a lot of time. However, when broken down and analyzed we have less than 100 days to finish the job and leave our legacy in Iraq.

We have a short time to finish the necessary training with the Iraqi Army and Police, get the government and local leaders to work closer to address the needs of the people, and properly pack up our equipment.

This phase represents the most difficult time of the deployment.

You have to continue to concentrate on the mission, build up our Iraqi partners and at the same time get ready to depart Iraq and return to Joint Base Lewis McCord. All the hard work and dedication you and our families have put into this deployment rests on our departing Iraq responsibly, taking care of our soldiers physically and mentally, plus properly reintegrating our families.

This will be done through a well laid out reverse Soldier's readiness program followed by Block Leave from Oct. 8 to Nov. 7. How we accomplish



these tasks and our behavior during this time period will be just as important as the many achievements of this deployment. We must protect our reputation by maintaining the same high level of cohesion, accountability and responsibility that has served us well so far.

Let's honor those that have fallen and made the ultimate sacrifice by carefully watching after our Soldiers, acting like the professionals that you all are, and leaving a positive lasting impression on our Iraqi partners.

Let's focus on the mission, stay vigilant, and properly execute our redeployment.

Raider 6
"To the Objective!"

RAIDER 7

CSM JEFFREY HUGGINS

4th SBCT COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR



Raiders,

The end of our mission in Iraq grows near, but as we draw closer towards our eventual redeployment, I ask you, on the heels of Memorial Day, to reflect on just how far we have come.

The cost, in both blood and treasure that we as a brigade, as an army and as a nation have paid to reach this point, must never be forgotten.

During the Surge we drove the enemy from their safe havens, and it is during our current deployment that we have pushed them even further, marginalizing their efforts to destabilize the country and impose fear back upon the people of Iraq.

We have ensured the citizens of Iraq were able to conduct safe and secure elections, and through our numerous agriculture and civil capacity projects that their future can be a prosperous one.

Working alongside our Iraqi Security Force partners, we have seen them continue to grow into a stronger, more capable force, committed to defending their people. We will leave them with

the knowledge, training and desire to continue that growth after we are gone.

I am proud of the hard work you have done, and of all that we have accomplished, but there is more ahead and the enemy still gets a vote.

We are about to enter the final push before our redeployment and you must remain vigilant. The enemy, in a desperate attempt to remain relevant, would like nothing more than to continue to strike out at us during these final days. We must deny them that opportunity.

Raider leaders; check and re-check your equipment and TTPs. Make sure your Soldiers know and do what is right. Don't start cutting corners, and give an already committed adversary any advantage. Discipline, duty and accountability will help ensure we return our Raiders home safely with our reputation intact.

In closing, I ask that we honor the sacrifices, reputation and commitment of those who have gone before us. By completing this mission professionally with dignity and respect we protect the legacy of selfless ser-



vice and mission accomplishment rendered by our comrades'

Remember:

BE SAFE...

BE SMART...

And when required... BE LETHAL!

Raider 7

Col. John Norris
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Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Huggins
4-2 SBCT Command Sergeant Major
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"The Last Patrol"

The Raider Brigade is working with acclaimed artist James Dietz in creating a piece of art that captures the legacy of both American and Iraqi history with the original commissioning of "The Last Patrol". This print will represent the triumphs of the Raider Brigade as we assisted the Iraqi Security Forces and Government of Iraq in forging ahead on the road to both democracy and independence.

Do not miss out on this **limited time offer** to own museum quality art at a fraction of the price as it captures our brigade's legacy. **Each print is only \$100 and will come with its own certificate of authenticity including historical narrative.** Only by ordering during this presale can you ensure such deal. After the pre-sale has closed, these prints will become available starting at \$175.



For more information:

In Iraq contact:
your **UNIT PRINT REPRESENTATIVE**
In the United States contact:
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NOTE: Picture is works by artist James Dietz that were previously commissioned



U.S. Soldiers' time at



**Story and photo by
Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.**

JOINT SECURITY STATION SHEIKH AMIR, Iraq – After living at Joint Security Station Sheikh Amir since January, Soldiers with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment “Tomahawks,” cut the power to the station April 13.

The next day, their containerized housing units were loaded onto trucks and sent back to Camp Taji. Soldiers spent their last night at the JSS sleeping on or inside their Strykers.

Then, after much debate from the Iraqi government and military, they decided to retain the JSS rather than close it, and the CHUs were brought back, said 1st Lt. Shaun Futch, the battalion logistical officer who handled the paperwork surrounding the debate.

It wouldn't be until a transfer of authority ceremony here May 7 that the Soldiers said their final goodbyes to their Iraqi Army partners and handed full control of the JSS over to the IA.

Iraqi Army leaders assessed that the base was needed to sustain security

in the area and keep Iraqi units working closely with the locals.

“We pushed for it to be a transfer on both the Iraqi side and the American side,” said Futch, a Ninety Six, S.C. native. “It ended up being a lot of heartache and a lot of pain to make it a transfer instead of a closure, but the partnership really played a big part (on the decision); everybody wanted it to stay.”

JSSs and other smaller security outposts were established across Iraq during the 2007 Iraqi surge as a way for U.S. and Iraqi forces to maintain security

in areas that had once been controlled by insurgent forces and militias.

As the security situation has improved, U.S. forces have transferred or shut down bases as part of the responsible drawdown of forces in Iraq called for by U.S. President Barack Obama.

Although preparing for the transfer took months, the living conditions of the remaining Soldiers on the base were not greatly affected, said 1st Lt. Dustin Deperro, the platoon leader for the Mobile Gun System platoon, and his Soldiers who lived on the JSS for weeks at a time.

“Quality of life (on the JSS)

JSS ends with transfer



from January to the end of March was excellent,” said Deperro, a native of Mammoth Lakes, Calif., adding that Soldiers had internet access and were able to easily keep in touch with friends and family back in the United States.

April marked the beginning of the closure of the JSS which meant the company would slowly start reducing its footprint, he said.

“We transitioned from living in buildings on the JSS to living out of our Strykers to allow the CHUs to be removed, said Deperro. “It was more of a camping trip

by then than an extended stay at a JSS.”

The executive officer of Co. A, 1st Lt. Louis Harrington, saw the transfer as an important event in the Tomahawk’s record books.

“It’s a piece of history,” said Harrington, a Cody, Wyo. native. He noted the JSS was where 2nd Bn., 23rd Inf. Regt.’s command operations center was located during the 2010 Iraqi elections.

Capt. Nate Showman, the commander of Company A, explained that the transfer of the base to the Government of Iraq not only indicates the rapid progress of

the overall security situation in Iraq, it also represents a personal milestone in his military career.

“The last time I was here, we opened [a JSS] up,” he said. “This time, we got to close one down.”

The historical importance of the elections and transferring control of JSSs from U.S. to Iraqi hands has also left an impact on the enlisted Soldiers who lived there.

“You always heard about it (on the news), but to actually witness it is something,” said Sgt. Brandon Blake, a gunner with the MGS Plt. “It’s kind of cool

to be there for it.”

Blake deployed with 2nd Bn., 23rd Inf. Regt. to Iraq in 2007-08, where he and other Soldiers built their own JSS from scratch out of an abandoned meat-packing plant southwest of Baghdad.

Comparing his previous JSS experience to this one, Blake, an Anacortes, Wash. native, said he has witnessed the progress made in the country and reminds Soldiers that the unit’s time in Iraq is almost over.

“I’m glad that we got to an end state where everybody could be happy,” said Futch. “It’s a situation where everybody won.”



MANCHU 5

Maj. Stephen Phillips

4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Executive Officer



Families, Friends, and Fellow Manchus,

We hope that this month's installment finds each of you well and readying yourselves for the start of summertime.

The battalion is preparing for the long, hot days ahead but is encouraged that dealing with the heat is just one more event marking another step closer to returning to the Pacific Northwest.

The temperature hasn't been the only significant change felt at Joint Security Station Nasir Wa Salam during the month of May. May saw the battalion undergo a significant shift in how we operate alongside our Iraqi allies. While our return is still several months off, the foundation for reducing the scope of our mission in western Abu Ghraib was laid this past month. Our day-to-day operations ranging from security patrols to meeting local leaders and tribal shaykhs have slowly begun to be curtailed. While the battalion is still focused on assisting the Iraqi Army and Police maintain security throughout their area, we are beginning to balance other requirements such as executing training programs for our own Soldiers, supporting Iraqi training events, and steadily beginning to execute the preliminary steps towards moving the unit from our small JSS to big city living at Victory Base Complex, and eventually back to the United States later in the summer. The month has been busy and has introduced new challenges, but the intrepid Warriors who fill the ranks of this battalion continually find ways to accomplish their missions.

While the results of the Iraqi National

Election continue to be sorted out at the strategic level, each of the companies continues to make quantifiable tactical progress with their Iraqi brothers.

Havoc (Headquarters and Headquarters) Company spent a good portion of the month working through "interior design" matters as the U.S. portion of JSS NWS shrunk even further in preparation for handing it over to a smaller, follow-on unit in early July. Additionally, HHC supported several Iraqi training events that gave the Iraqis training in skills that will be critical to their future success. These training programs received accolades from several U.S. and Iraqi general officers; praise that the scouts, mortars, medics, and our logistics support team from the brigade support battalion earned in full.

Both Able and Comanche Companies spent a better part of the month executing a mission that is indicative of how far this country has progressed in recent years. Instead of solely searching out the few enemy threats that remain in our area, these two companies spent many long days searching out farmers who own lands that are viable for the delivery of greenhouses to help bolster agriculture in the area. The area that the battalion operates in is falls in the region known from ancient history as "Mesopotamia." This region was a part of the "Fertile Crescent" of the Middle East and has played a critical role in sustaining life in the harsh climate of Iraq for millennia. The area has historically been the most productive agricultural region in all of the Middle East and today both Co. A and C are doing their best to rein-



vigorate modern-day farmers' abilities to provide the necessary crops and sustenance for the people of Iraq.

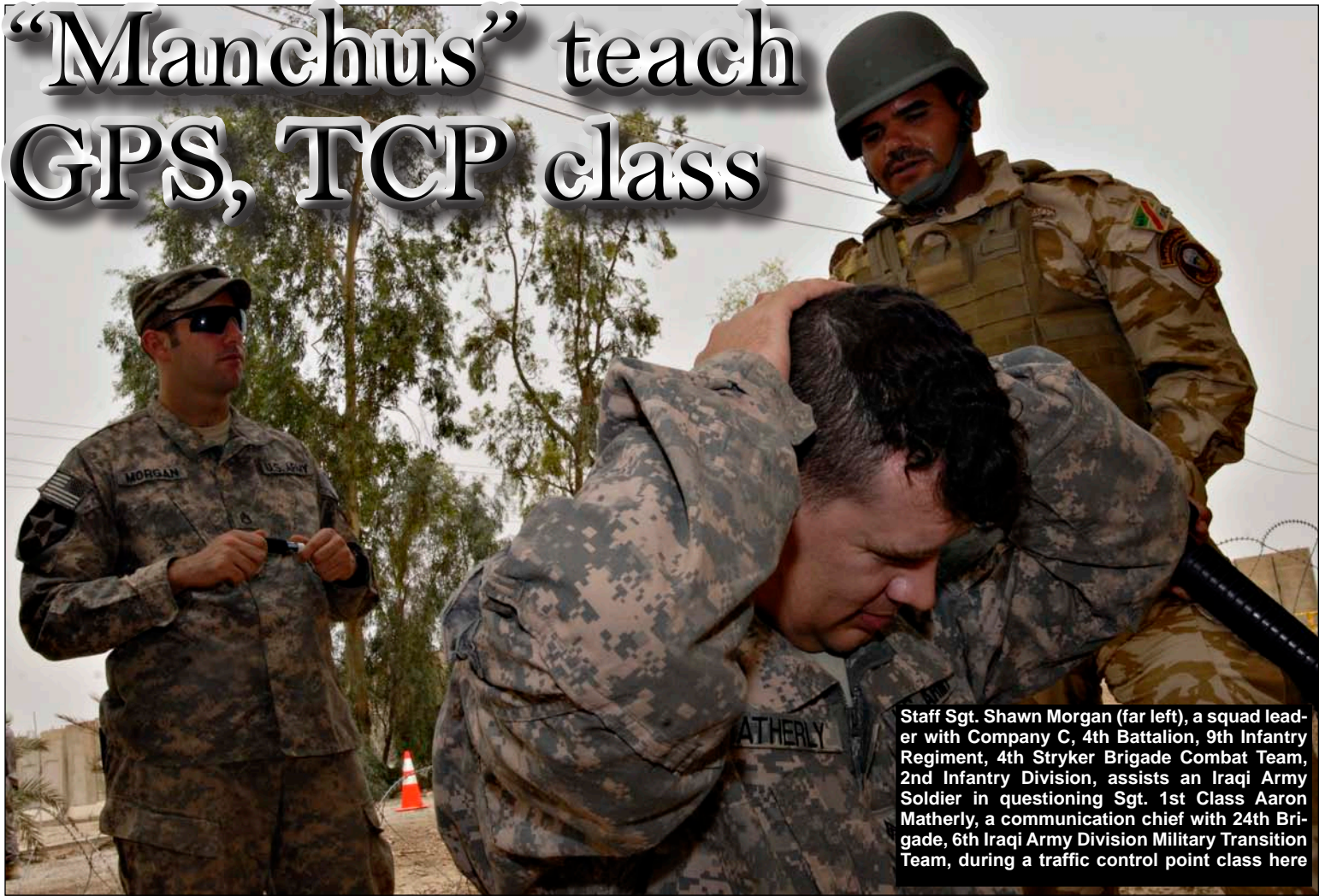
Blowtorch Company continued to assist the Iraqi Army and Police in the security of Nasir Wa Salam. The company discovered a large cache of enemy materials hidden in the floor of a home thanks to some great investigative work. This find may be the lynchpin to our combined efforts of making the city of 130,000 Iraqis a safer, more stable place to live.

Finally, the staff has maintained its rigorous schedule of planning the battalion's operations beyond the immediate horizon. It was exciting to see that just over the next horizon sits Lewis-McChord and reintegration with our Manchu family back on the home front! Enjoy your start of summer...
...and Keep Up the Fire!

Maj. Phillips
"Keep Up the Fire!"



“Manchus” teach GPS, TCP class



Staff Sgt. Shawn Morgan (far left), a squad leader with Company C, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, assists an Iraqi Army Soldier in questioning Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Matherly, a communication chief with 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division Military Transition Team, during a traffic control point class here

**Story by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.**

JOINT SECURITY STATION NASIR WA SALAM, Iraq – “It’s easy!” exclaimed Sgt. 1st Class Mark Street, demonstrating the benefits and capabilities of a Global Positioning System to a group of Iraqi Army Soldiers.

Street, a platoon sergeant and the noncommissioned officer in charge of training, was one of four instructors who led the Iraqi Soldiers through several blocks of training here May 19.

Sgt. William Lamb, an assistant instructor for the training, and a fire team leader with Company C, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment “Manchus”, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division said knowing how to use the satellite-based navigation sys-

tem is essential for the IA Soldiers.

“Most of the places that they operate in are farmland so it’s out in the middle of nowhere and they need to be able to annotate that location,” said Lamb, a Miami native.

Some of the Iraqi Soldiers attending the class had previous knowledge of how to use the hand-held system, but Street and Lamb, who are more experienced with the equipment, showed them a few tricks of the trade to operate it more efficiently.

“There’s a variety of methods to do things, this is just one to add to their arsenal so they can become a better fighting force,” said Lamb.

The Iraqi Soldiers were hesitant at first to adopt the new knowledge introduced to them, but they gained interest after seeing the 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Regt.

Photo by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Soldiers operate the GPS confidently and skillfully.

“When someone is accustomed to doing things a certain way, having to break them down and teach them a new way (is difficult) and hopefully they’re open minded enough to receive that,” said Lamb, adding he felt that happened during the training.

Across the street, Staff Sgt. Shawn Morgan, a squad leader, and Sgt. Anthony Morris, a team leader, both with C Co., 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Regt., 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., set up the second part of the training involving traffic control point (TCP) operations.

The two instructors used concertina wire and IA humvees to create a make-shift checkpoint.

“TCP is the basic concept of what the Iraqi Army does,” said Morgan,

a Bowie, Texas native. "TCPs are the first line defense fighting against (vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices) and moving contraband through the country."

The Iraqi Soldiers run checkpoints all the time, so they have the basic knowledge of how to do it, said Morris, a Sacramento, Calif. native. However, after operating in Iraq for so long, U.S. Soldiers have picked up their own methods of running checkpoints.

"All we're doing is putting our input in and trying to show them how they can make it better (with) little things

that we've learned throughout the years of being here."

During the training, the Iraqi Soldiers got a surprise visit from Col. Rahim, the Iraqi brigade's commander.

"It motivated them because it's getting them recognition," said Morris. "Col. Rahim is actually seeing them out there training."

The added motivation from the Iraqi Soldiers reminded their U.S. counterparts that all the hard work they're putting into training makes the area better.

"I would like for these soldiers we're teaching now... to take back the infor-

mation we're giving them and train their own soldier on what they've learned," said Morris. "That way not only have we trained nine guys, but we trained nine guys proficiently so they can train their guys."

Morgan, on his second tour to Iraq, said that he also had hopes for the end of the training.

"I want to be able to go back home at the end of this deployment knowing that they're able to do their job a little bit better and make their country safer so that...we don't have to come back over here in the future," said Morgan.

USF assist clinic renovations with CERP funds

**Story by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.**

JOINT SECURITY STATION NASIR WA SALAM, Iraq –

There is only sand where a concrete floor should be, and plastic chairs are strewn about in what was once the reception building for the only medical clinic in the town of Nasir Wa Salam.

The building, where patients gathered before receiving treatment, along with parts of the main clinic compound, had been partially destroyed by a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device during the days of sectarian violence.

Restoring the clinic so that the people of Nasir Wa Salam have access to better medical care is a vital step in improving the civil capacity of the area. With the help of local leaders, contractors and Capt. Mark Haynes, the project purchasing officer with 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment "Manchus", 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, are making it happen.

"We stepped in with (Commander's Emergency Response Program) money to repair the damages to the main clinic and then to...the reception area, which was pretty devastated by the blast," said Haynes.

Haynes makes sure paperwork surrounding the project gets approved and, with security provided by Soldiers in Company B, 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Regt., regularly checks on the clinics to make sure progress is on track and on schedule.

Nasir Wa Salam isn't the only area in the Manchu operation environment in need, the St. Louis native said, adding that they are working with a clinic in Khandari that hasn't been functional since Operation Desert Storm.

"We started pretty much from the ground up," said Haynes, explaining that the Khandari clinic wasn't operational due to a lack of trained medical staff. "We're rebuilding and refurnishing it, but (Ministry of Health) is going to staff it."

The total cost of the work being done to the Khandari clinic adds up to roughly \$88,000, while the Nasir Wa Salam restoration project costs around \$65,000, said Haynes.

Both projects began in April, with the clinic in Nasir Wa Salam completed and reopened on June 7 at a ceremony attended by local leaders and members of the Raider Brigade.

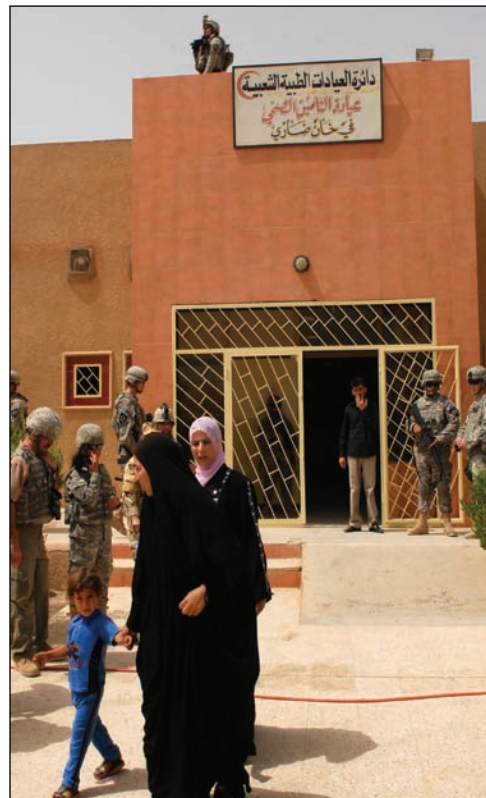
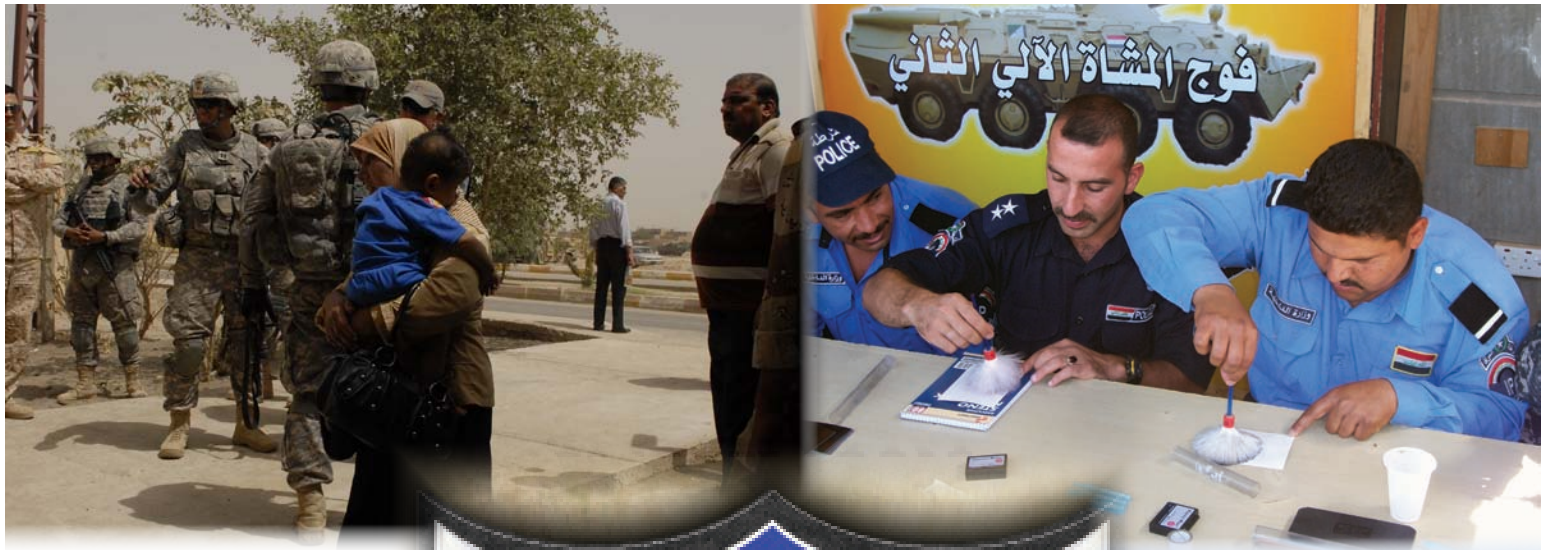


Photo by Spc. Luisito Brooks, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf Div.

Local Iraqi women and a child depart the Nasir Wa Salam clinic while U.S. Soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division look on, June 7. The clinic was reopened that day after a several month long renovation project which rebuilt parts of the structure destroyed by an vehicle-borne improvised explosive device.

See CLINIC, page 31



TOMAHAWKS

1st Lt. Robert Fenoglio

Company C, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment XO



Tomahawks,

Crazyhorse Company and the Tomahawk Battalion continue our work to secure the population, neutralize threats to us and our allies and support civil capacity development across northwest Baghdad.

With the national elections behind us, we and our Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) partners remain committed to keeping the population safe from the dangers of extremist and political violence as Iraqis strive to make the leap from election results to a seated government in Baghdad.

While the work continues, every day we see progress on the part of our Iraqi counterparts in becoming effective, adaptive forces capable of protecting the government and the population from the threat of violence.

Over the past few months, our ISF partners have shown themselves increasingly capable of taking the lead to secure their operating environment. It is imperative that the Iraqi Army (IA) and the Iraqi Police (IP) work hand-in-hand to ensure no gaps in security emerge as a result of our scaling back.

The IA and IP have a little bit of institutional rivalry, which isn't all bad (think Army and Marines), but the Tomahawks are working hard to make sure that when it counts, all members of the ISF come together to protect the Iraqis and the government they serve.

Each organization has its own areas of focus.

For example, 1st Platoon, in conjunction with our battalion Law Enforcement Professional and attached Air Force trainers, held a 5-day crime scene investigation course for both IP Patrolmen and IA Soldiers. Both have a role to play in the current environment: IA often respond with their Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) teams, while IPs have the authority to conduct criminal investigations and make arrests.

The training we provided involved practical exercises in which IA arrived first to the crime scene and secured it, preserving all of the evidence and making sure the area was safe. Shortly thereafter, the IP arrived and took charge of the investigation, conducting interviews and gathering forensic evidence such as fingerprints and DNA samples.

The course showed each soldier and patrolman their ideal role at the crime scene and acted as a bonding experience for those involved. Soldiers and patrolmen came to understand each other's roles and how both groups worked toward the same goal in different ways.

Another part of securing the population is showing them the way forward, offering a better alternative to sectarian strife and economic misery.

One method that the Tomahawks are using is a micro-grant program to help deserving businesses that hold the po-



tential to stimulate local economies.

Take, for example, Sameer Arif Maatab al Mashadani, who owns and operates an iron works in a small market northwest of Camp Taji.

Sameer makes and repairs tools for local farmers and does metal work for other local businesses. His shop isn't holding up very well, and needs some structural work and a door.

Also, if he could afford to buy some welder tools, he could make and repair tools at a much faster rate, providing goods to his customers more quickly and at lower cost; those customers, in turn, can use his products to improve their own business and use the savings to purchase other goods.

1st Lt. Robert Fenoglio
"Tomahawks!"

Tomahawks make macro difference with micro grants



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

**Story by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.**

Staff Sgt. Carl Hendricks, a squad leader with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, meets with a falafel shop owner to discuss micro grants to benefit the shop.

HAMAMIAT, Iraq – There's an empty space where a front window should be, letting in flies that climb over food waiting to be sold to customers, while dust coats the shelves at a hole-in-the-wall falafel shop in Hamamiat.

The shop owner, Majid Saadoon Noor, is caught in a catch-22. He believes that with improvements to his shop, he can double his business. However, because he isn't drawing in enough customers, he can't make enough money to

afford those improvements. He also is unable to secure a small business loan because they are unavailable from Iraqi banks.

There is help. U.S. forces are offering micro-grants to Iraqi small business owners to help grow the local economy.

Company B, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment Soldiers visited Majid's falafel shop and another business to hand out paperwork for the shop owners to apply for the micro-grants.

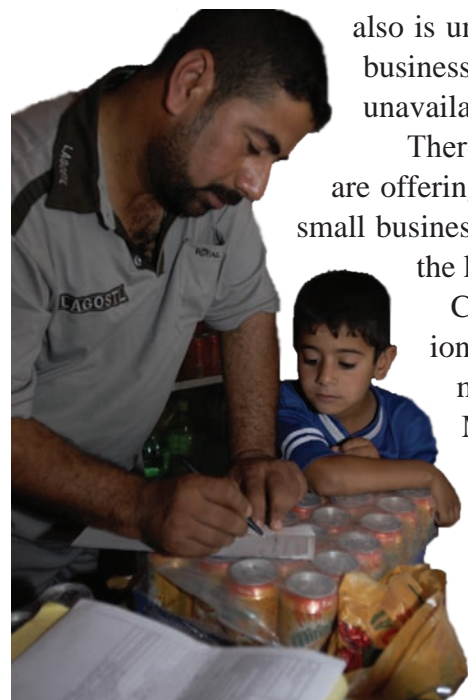


Photo by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Funding for micro-grants comes from the Commanders' Emergency Response Program, explained Staff Sgt. Carl

Hendricks, a squad leader with B Co., 2nd Bn., 23rd Inf. Regt.

Commanders in the battalion, working with local Iraqi leaders, choose businesses they feel would be the best candidates to help boost the local economy, foster security and leave a positive impression in the community long after the brigade redeploys.

Through micro-grants of up to \$5,000, business owners can purchase air conditioners, windows, appliances and furniture, something Majid said he would like for his shop to make his customers happier.

"I'm looking forward to improving the service provided," said Majid.

Local citizens and members of the Iraqi Security Forces view the falafel stand as a main stop for food, so getting the owner better conditions for his products helps the people in that area, said Hendricks.

At a nearby sewing shop, which also serves as a school where Iraqi women learn how to sew, a different need was identified.

Unlike the falafel shop, the work area in the sewing shop does not need as much structural work. However, the women lack many of the necessary supplies for sewing, such as fabric and thread.

The head teacher at the school also filled out paperwork given to her by the Soldiers to apply for a micro-grant.

"It'll help (the populace) so that when we do leave, they're able to have food and have their schools," said Hendricks. "They can be independent."

Ranger graduate receives USF-I CSM coin

**Story by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.**

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Stretcher. Military Police. Tab.

Those were the only three ways Staff Sgt. Jorge Fabian said he would leave Ranger School.

It was his dedication to his personal goal and his ability to share what he learned while pursuing that goal that landed Fabian, a squad leader with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment as one of 10 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division Soldiers here who received a coin from Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur Coleman Jr., the III Corps command sergeant major during Coleman's visit May 10.

"I believe you can make yourself better by surrounding yourself with people smarter than you and better than you, so when (Command Sgt. Maj. Coleman) shook my hand and gave me my coin, it came with great honor," said Fabian.

Coleman said he noticed the exceptional nature of someone Fabian's age accomplishing the things he did and offering to share his knowledge with lower-enlisted Soldiers.

"He's a 40-year-old staff sergeant that went to ranger school late (in his

Coleman referred to began when Fabian immigrated to the United States in 1982 from Mendoza, Argentina and later joined the Army in 2004.

Two years down the road, he realized one of his biggest goals when he decided he wanted to earn a Ranger tab.

In order to get the tab, which is worn on the Army Combat Uniform just above the unit patch, Fabian had to make sacrifices and overcome challenges.

Fabian was pulled out of Ranger School his first time around because his unit was deploying to Iraq, but that didn't stop him his second time as 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. deployed back to Iraq in the fall of 2009.

He obtained permission to deploy late and finally earn his Ranger tab.

In November, he faced another challenge that could've thrown him off track; the birth of his daughter.

His daughter required heart surgery and died 14 days after birth. However, not even that could pull him away from his dream.

"I was so determined to finish school no matter what that I never

See COIN, page 25



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur Coleman Jr., the III Corps command sergeant major, shakes the hand of Staff Sgt. Jorge Fabian, a squad leader with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, during a coin presentation here May 10.

life) which obviously says something about him as an individual," said Coleman. "It says something about him as far as his training and also says that he wants to continue to give at a higher level; He's going to help (his battalion) out immensely."

The journey to becoming the man



ROCK 6

Lt. Col. John Leffers

1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment Commander



Greetings Rock of the Marne Warriors!

We had another very successful month in April and are continuing to reap the benefits of our partnership over the past eight months. Rock Soldiers were challenged with many events ranging from the handover of the Joint Coordination Center Abu Ghraib to changes of command/responsibilities, to 238th day, commemorative of 38th Infantry Regiment. Meanwhile, the Rock Battalion is slowly making a transition to an advise and assist role.

Attack Company is working diligently to establish greenhouses in the operating environment to boost the local economy and help improve the farmers' way of life. The company has also been conducting platoon modular training with the Iraqi Army and Police while simultaneously executing numerous joint daily patrols with its Iraqi partners.

Bayonet Company is also working on establishing greenhouses in their operating environment to increase the local economy in the northern part of OE Rock. They are also conducting joint patrols and training with their Iraqi Army partners while attending numerous tribal shaykh meetings in order to ensure the reconciliation process continues in good order. Their outstanding work has significantly improved the Soldier skills of the Iraqi Army and kept the peace among the population.

Chaos Company handed over the JCC

Abu Ghraib Local Police Station to the Iraqi Police signifying they are truly in the lead and capable of enforcing law and order. The company also conducted basic rifle marksmanship. This event was Iraqi led and provided further evidence of their determination to lead the way and continue to bettering themselves. The company has also paid out six micro grants continuing to boost the local economy.

Hunter (Headquarters and Headquarters) Company continues to provide



“Their outstanding work has significantly improved the Soldier skills of the Iraqi Army and kept the peace among the population.”

-Lt. Col. John Leffers

support to the line companies as needed. The exceptionally talented staff has been working feverishly on the next phases of our mission, to set the conditions for a safe redeployment to Joint Base Lewis-McChord when that order is announced. Additionally, the battalion executed a very successful 238th day in theater with squad competitions that were held in the vicinity of Victory Base Complex.

The scouts continue to maintain a very strong partnership with the Iraqi Police detectives and the mortars with the 6th IA Division Mortar Company. The Medical Platoon is providing the best

medical support in theater to our Warriors!

In closing, I want to thank you for all of your continued tireless work and incredible energy I observe each day both in sector and in our battalion footprint on East Liberty. The magnificent results you produce each day are manifested by the noteworthy improvements in Abu Ghraib. Your strong support to the Iraqi Security Forces, the local Government of Iraq, and the citizens of Abu Ghraib has been phenomenal!

Rock 6
“Rock of the Marne!”

University “beefed” up



**Story and photos by Spc. Luisito Brooks
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.**

ABU GHRAIB, Iraq – While searching for shade, nearly a dozen black and white cows, their long tails swatting at flies, wandered to the edge their fenced paddock where Soldiers from the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division had stopped to pet and feed them hay through the bars.

Students from the University of Baghdad’s College of Agriculture in Abu Ghraib displayed their 11 new Holstein dairy cows given to them by the Raider Brigade May 26.

The university also received state of the art equipment used to conduct artificial insemination, to increase the size of their herd and to train others to do the same.

“This project has been our priority,” said Mr. Hamza, the Dean of the University of Baghdad’s College of Agriculture. “We have the cows to teach our students at our school... the proper procedure of artificial insemination.”

This \$83,000 project included the 22 dairy cows divided equally between the University’s Veterinary and Agriculture Colleges, food and specialized equipment to conduct artificial insemination.

While each college campus will have their own herd of 11 cows to begin with, partnership and the sharing of knowl-

edge, training and resources will be encouraged between the two schools.

“The student will learn how to clean, feed and maintain these animals,” said Hamza. “The students will use the same equipment that student at American universities are using.”

He explained that he feels the best way to improve the economy and standard of living for the people of Iraq is through providing them with access to a good education and the ability to acquire skills that will lead towards employment.

Upon completion of the training at either of the two colleges, each student will have a valuable skill set which they will be able to bring to the to the job market.

“Projects like these have endless possibilities,” said Cpt. Talgin Cannon, the project manager from 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. “The knowledge gained from this will give these students a place in this society to make improvements.”

With each cow producing an average of six gallons of milk every day, the school can also capitalize from this project by selling milk collected by students on the local Iraqi market.

“We can sell the dairy cows or its milk to raise money for

See COW, page 17

Raiders lift past competition

**Story and photos by
Pfc. Mitchell Fosman
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – A gym full of Soldiers gathered around the bench-press, pumped up and ready for a showdown of strength and stamina.

Members of the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, “Team Raider,” waited anxiously to begin this month’s 225 pound bench-press competition on May 13, here.

Each of the four teams competing were comprised of four members, who had to push out as many repetitions of the 225 pound barbell as they could in four-minutes. Competitors were allowed to swap out and return to do more repetitions as they wanted within the time limit.

The spotlight that day, was on the Soldiers from the 1192nd Engineer Battalion who won the top spot last month and were here defending their title.

“We’re gonna to strip ya’lls title,” said Sgt. 1st Class Alfred Jackson, a member of Team Raider and the communications non-commissioned officer in charge for the 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., as he sat on the bench before the event began.

By no means a small individual, Jackson, a Columbus, Ga. native, was still one of the smaller competitors that day, yet that fact was

outweighed by his reputation around the gym.

“He’s the one on the board for the 400 pound club,” whispered one spectator to another, alluding to Jackson being one of the few individuals who have exceeded that weight in the bench press.

Taking the bar for his team first, Jackson let loose with a burst of intensity, but like all competitors eventually was worn down by the weight.

“You’ve got to do as many reps [as you can] before you’re tired,” explained Pvt. George Fuller, an East Orange, N.J. native, from the 38th Eng., 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., also with Team Raider.

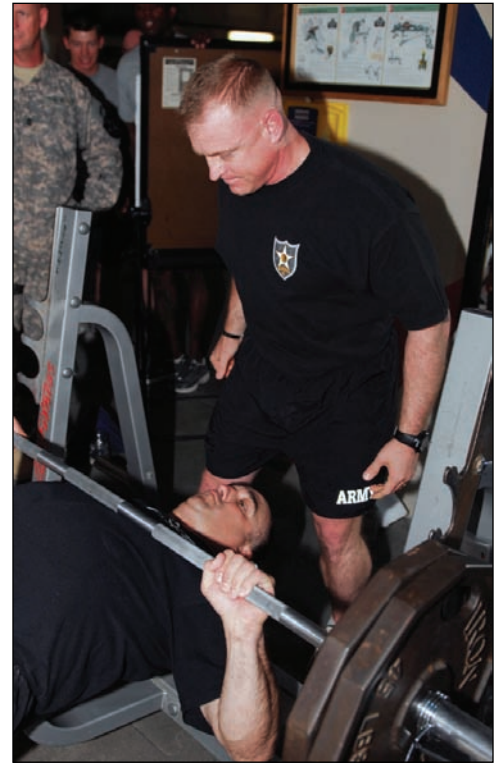
As fatigue began to set in, Team Raider members swapped places seamlessly, yelling encouragement to one another as they heaved the weights into the air.

With fuel still in his tank and time running short on the clock, Lt. Col. Darron Wright, the 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. deputy commanding officer, stepped in to finish off the last of his amazing 38 repetitions – more than any other single competitor. The only other competitor that came close was Jackson with 35.

“We came here to compete and we brought our best to take the title” Wright explained still catching his breath while he waited on the announcement of the winner.

In the end, Team Raider won the competition with a combined 134 repetitions, with the former champions trailing in a distant second with 117 repetitions.

“Feels good to be the winner,” said



While being spotted by Maj. William Voorhies, executive officer for the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, Lt. Col. Darron Wright, the 4th SBCT deputy commanding officer, presses out his 38th and final repetition during a 225lbs press-off competition at the Scorpion Gym here. The Raider’s team won the competition with 134 combined repetitions.

Jackson, covered in sweat.

After the medals were handed out, the crowd slowly departed and the gym returned to the normality of Soldiers working out, staying fit to fight and possibly training for the next competition.



Photo by Spc. Luisito Brooks, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf Div.

During a display of the 11 newly purchased dairy cows at the University of Baghdad, College of Veterinary Medicine, 1st Lt. Kimberly Brown with the 45th Military Intelligence Company, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division allows two of the cows to lick her hand May 26 here.

...COW from page 16

the school,” said Hamza. “Getting the books and lab equipment that we need will be easier now.”

As the Raider Brigade prepares to depart Iraq later this year, they will leave with the knowledge that they have helped ensure that institutions like the university and its agriculture and veterinary colleges will be successful in the future.

“We want to leave the university with more than just dairy cows,” said Lt. Col. Darron Wright, the 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. deputy commanding officer. “It is the partnership of the two (colleges) that will remain.”



BANDOG 6

Capt. Bernie Balsis

BTroop, 2nd Sqdn., 1st Cav. Regt. Commander



Troopers, families, and friends of the Blackhawks,

Following a successful month of operations in April, Bandog Troop remains very busy. We conducted an Iraqi Army training week where we provided requested training to our IA partners. We have also started our pre-change of command inventories for my upcoming change of command. Bandog Troop is excited to welcome Capt. Casey McCotter, from Mount Holly, N.C., who will be taking over the troop in the coming weeks.

We have begun planning and coordinating the final details to transfer over our joint security station to the Iraqi Police whom we currently live with. While we remain quite busy, the troop continues to maintain strong relationships with the local tribal leaders and local government officials, and meet with them regularly. With the partnerships we established and the competency of the Iraqi Security Forces, we are now able to focus less on lethal operations and more on non-lethal priorities, such as training and ensuring that we successfully transfer our responsibility to the ISF. As of now, the ISF in our sector are in the lead. We conduct our required security operations, and are ready to help if the ISF request our assistance. The IA and IP easily maintain the peace themselves and rarely request our help.

Our Iraqi Army partners constantly pick the minds of Bandog troopers. We provided a week of classes on map reading, dismounted and mounted movements,

and some basic classes on conducting a raid. Bandog Troop did an excellent job, training the Iraqi Army soldiers and giving them the tools necessary to teach their peers and soldiers in the future. As for the IP, we have an Iraqi Police advisor with 20 years of experience as a police officer in the Atlanta area. He conducts training for the three Iraqi Police stations within our squadron's OE, two of which are in Bandog Troop's area of responsibility. He closely mentors the IP investigators, and helps them improve their daily operations and investigative processes. Rest assured, the IA and IP have no problems in maintaining law and order in our troop OE with their increased level of competence.

The proficiency and increased capabilities of our ISF partners allows us to perform more non-lethal operations. One big project we are working on is identifying local farmers who could benefit from advanced farming techniques. In the middle of one of the hottest areas in the world, irrigating large farms can be troublesome with the limited amount of water. Our project allows these farmers to build greenhouses and utilize drip irrigation on their farms. The greenhouses will reduce the amount of moisture escaping the ground, while the drip irrigation will increase efficiency in watering their farms.

In addition to the non-lethal operations, we will be transferring over a JSS occupied by USF for over three years. In 2007 when the 1st Cavalry Division ran the JSS, over 100 insurgents attacked the station for four hours. Two Americans lost their lives defending the



JSS. Later on that year, 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Regt. ran the JSS during the Raiders' last deployment.

Thanks to the hard work of our Bandog Troopers and ISF, our area is now quiet and peaceful. Bandog Troop continues to work tirelessly to minimize the amount of additional military equipment left behind from previous units. Although we are busy removing our equipment from the JSS, our troopers still remain vigilant and want to ensure that the area remains safe. I am confident this Troop will easily accomplish all required tasks, successfully transfer the JSS to the government of Iraq, and continue with the responsible drawdown of forces. Most of all, everyone in Bandog Troop is looking forward to our upcoming redeployment and reunion with our loved ones.

Capt. Bernie Balsis



Cav Soldiers teach IA weapon maintenance

*Story by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.*

Sgt. Olin Harrington, a team leader with C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, corrects an Iraqi Army Soldier who performed a functions check on an M16 rifle incorrectly during a weapon maintenance class taught in Ezri, May 12.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq –It is the job of the non-commissioned officer to train Soldiers and when confronted with twenty Iraqi Army Soldiers holding their recently issued M16s, that's exactly what Staff Sgt. Peter Harris did.

A senior scout with C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, Harris and fellow Soldiers from his unit shared their knowledge of how to maintain and operate the weapon with the Iraqi Soldiers in Ezri.

"They need to be profi-

cient not only in firing it, but also how to maintain the weapon so it's always mission ready," said Harris, a Portland,

Ore. native who led a class on how to properly clear, assemble, disassemble, and check the Iraqi Soldiers' rifles.

He emphasized how a Soldier, his buddy, or his whole team could be killed while out on a mission if even just one of them had a weapon malfunction due to poor maintenance.

"It only takes one (enemy) to get a few off rounds off to take a couple of (the Iraqi Soldiers) out," said Harris.

Recognizing that a properly-functioning



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Spc. Jonathan Naputi (right), a gunner with C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, shows and Iraqi Army Soldier how to reassemble the bolt to his M16 rifle during a weapon maintenance class in Ezri, May 12.

weapon is important, Cpl. Muhsin Oiyd Elewi said that learning how to correctly clean his weapon was the most beneficial part of the training

“When I go outside, I protect my life with my rifle,” said Muhsin, explaining that his weapon is an integral part of his job and without good maintenance his rifle could malfunction while doing his job.

He added that he appreciated the training from his U.S. counterparts, who have been using the weapon for many years and are much more familiar with how it operates.

“They have much experience and I’m glad to be trained by the U.S. Army,” said Muhsin.

Harris, who is on his third deployment to Iraq since 2005, said he has witnessed the Iraqi Security Forces progress over the years, adding that he feels the U.S. troops don’t need to lead the way anymore

“We’re just helping them at this point,” said Harris, explaining that he has truly seen an noticeable improvement in the IA capabilities.

“It’s been great for me to watch them grow from my first year (in Iraq) until now. I didn’t feel like I started from the first stepping stone,” he said. “I felt like we were doing concurrent training, like a refresher for these guys.”



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.
Staff Sgt. Peter Harris, a senior scout with C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, demonstrates how to perform a functions check on an M16 after cleaning it during a weapon maintenance class in Ezri, May 12.

IP learn “Use of Force”

**Story and photo by
Pfc. Kim Hackbarth
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd
Inf. Div.**

TARMIYAH, Iraq – In May, Soldiers with C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment facilitated Iraqi Police “Use of Force” training at an IP station here.

The class was led by a civilian policeman from the United States and previously trained IPs, with 4th Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division Soldiers playing the role of local citizens during training scenarios similar to what the IPs encounter out on the streets.

The Soldiers provide the U.S. perspective on law enforcement and how it’s supposed to operate, said Staff Sgt. Anthony Lovell, a cavalry scout with C Troop, and the noncommissioned officer in charge of Iraqi Police advisory training.

“(We’re) trying to... train the Iraqi Police to where they can start establishing their foothold in their own country and ensuring that they have the knowledge and training that we would give our Soldiers,” said Lovell, a Phoenix native.

During the training, the Iraqi policemen learned the difference between deadly and non-lethal force through a series of classes.

Knowing when it is appropriate to use a shoulder lock to subdue uncooperative individuals and when to use a bullet to engage the enemy is important knowledge in the day-to-day work of IPs, like Muhanad, a policeman at the Tarmiyah station.

“Sometimes I have to use deadly force because we have different sit-

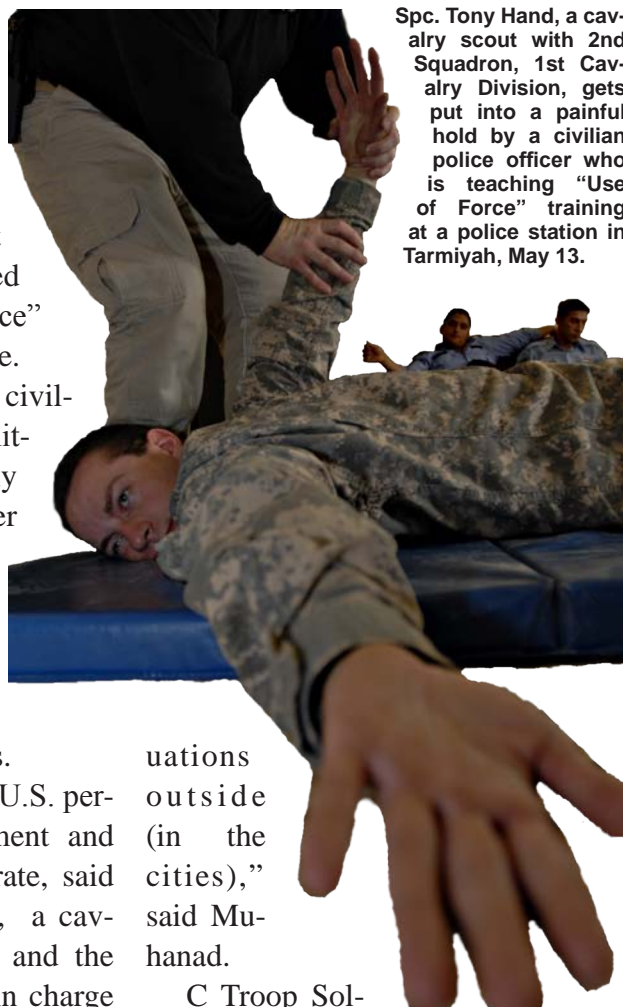
uations outside (in the cities),” said Muhanad.

C Troop Soldiers pushing hard to incorporate the “train the trainer” concept which allows students to take what they’ve learned and train their fellow ISF members.

Muhanad previously attended training with the C Troop Soldiers, returning this time as an instructor, showing the concept at work,

“(IP training is) important so we can start our successful withdrawal and turn over the area of the remaining operational environment over to the Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army,” said Lovell.

The IP training, which began May 15, is scheduled throughout the summer, moving to other IP stations in 2nd Sqdn., 1st Cav. Regt.’s operational environment.



Spc. Tony Hand, a cavalry scout with 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Division, gets put into a painful hold by a civilian police officer who is teaching “Use of Force” training at a police station in Tarmiyah, May 13.



VIKINGS

Capt. Thomas Dyrenforth

Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment Commander



Fellow Vikings, families, and friends,

Lasting momentum: that is the mission of Bravo Battery's year-long deployment as U.S. Forces close out the final chapter of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Battery B, otherwise known as Bravo Battery or Barbarian Battery, did not know at the time how large of a role they would end up playing to meet these objectives. In fact, the battery's actions would help shape both the political and military future of Iraq.

On the eve of the deployment in September 2009, there was some concern regarding the unit's overall readiness to complete its mission.

It had been little over a year since the battery redeployed from their last rotation in Iraq during "the Surge" of 2007-08 and they had just completed a strenuous eight month train-up to prepare for this mission.

The training focused on both the core artillery competencies and the skills required to perform the infantry role that artillerymen have grown accustomed to in recent years. The Soldiers expected to perform one of these missions, but they unsure which it would be.

Little did they know that by the conclusion of their combat tour, the battery would prove to be a dynamic unit capable of executing combat operations in the volatile West Baghdad area while successfully supporting ground operations through indirect artillery fires.

A prime example of the varied roles that Bravo Battery would fill was highlighted in the partnered operations during the March 7 National Elections.

As a key task towards the unit's initial

end state, the elections would serve as Iraq's defining moment since their liberation in 2003.

Battery B was called upon to assist in successful elections through providing 80 consecutive hours of security at West Baghdad's ballot counting center. During this time, hundreds of thousands of ballots in this highly-contested election were counted and transferred to the Karkh Ballot Warehouse.

This security mission entailed more than just holding a rifle and standing guard.

It featured the Soldiers on Baghdad's busy and potentially hostile streets with a much-elevated threat level and the local populace in close proximity. The leaders and Soldiers on the ground stayed vigilant throughout the entire mission as over 40 truckloads of ballots were delivered and the votes were counted. A platoon of Iraqi Army Commandos worked alongside Bravo Battery for the duration of the mission.

"These highly motivated Commandos represent the very best and take special pride in their jobs," said 1st Platoon leader, 1st Lt. Jeremiah Faught. "It is obvious that they emulate U.S. Forces and want to do the right thing."

Although security never became an issue, the official results of the elections remained disputed for weeks and prevented a new government from forming.

In early May, the battery was asked to again assist in the electoral process during Baghdad's ballot recount.

This time during the operation, the battery embedded into the ballot escort mission, preventing enemy forces



es from disrupting the recount. The Barbarians flawlessly facilitated the successful recount in an election that is expected to frame much of Iraq's future.

As the final phase of combat operations concludes, the spotlight now shifts fully to the ISF as Iraq transitions towards stability.

As for the Barbarians, they can feel a true sense of pride about their efforts during this closing phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Amid over 300 combat patrols, multiple operational sets and hundreds of hours of joint missions, the battery never lost focus on its mission.

The Barbarian presence in northwest Baghdad undoubtedly led to the successful unity of effort among security forces and has resulted in the irreversible momentum seen today.

Capt. Thomas Dyrenforth
"Vikings!"

Raider medics train for future

**Story by Sgt. Bryce S. Dubee,
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – It's understood that combat medics won't always be in combat and that upon redeploying they'll return to their roles of treating and caring for troops in a garrison environment.

To help prepare their medics for a future redeployment and to enable them to train others, the leaders of 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, enlisted the help of two National Registry paramedics from 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion to teach a combat medic sustainment course.

Focusing on three functional areas – pre-hospital trauma life support, advanced medical life support and tactical combat casualty care – the week-long course not only taught the students the course material but also how to teach it to others as well, explained Capt. Gary Grassi, a civil affairs team leader with Company B, 422nd CA Bn. and one of the two Army Reserve Soldiers who taught the class.

"The goal is to build a core group of instructors," said Sgt. 1st Class David Crowley, a Special Operations medical sergeant with 422nd and the other course instructor.

In addition to 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Soldiers, medics from nearby units participated in the training, including



Photo by Sgt. Bryce S. Dubee, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Spc. Amy Billups, a medic with Company C, 702nd Brigade Support Battalion, uses a stethoscope to listen to the breathing of her "patient," Sgt. Travis Nault, of Company B, 2nd Battalion 23rd Infantry Regiment, during a combat medic sustainment course. Members of 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion conducted the week-long training for 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division medics as a way for them to hone their skills and instruct others after they redeploy stateside.

from the two local troop medical clinics.

Witmer TMC nurse Capt. Beth Acker, said the course has many benefits for her Soldiers.

“It’s refreshing them of things they don’t get to do every day,” she said, adding that going beyond just treating traumatic injuries, the course deals with how to identify and treat ailments affecting patients that the medics may encounter on scene.

“It gets their critical thinking going,” Acker said.

The materials being taught comprise more than just off-the-cuff training by two experienced medical professionals: they are structured courses accepted by both national and international medical organizations, Crowley explained.

“We try to bridge the gap between civilian and military training,” the Rich-



Photo by Sgt. Bryce S. Dubee, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

Medics gather around Sgt. 1st Class Romond Davis, the brigade surgeon cell noncommissioned officer in charge, playing the role of a collapsed patient during a combat medic sustainment course.

mond, Va. native and critical care flight paramedic said. “If [the students] move away from the military world, they actually have some skills recognized in the civilian world.”

By focusing more on overall medical training than just treatment of traumatic injuries like the ones they would only see in combat, the medics are able to expand their skills in a broader way, explained Sgt. 1st Class Romond Davis, the brigade surgeon cell noncommissioned officer in charge.

“The training was very informative, very good for when we go back [home],” he said, explaining that the second half of the course taught the attendees how to set up training on all the topics they learned in the first half. “We’ll be able to stand up our own team ... to do a lot of in-house training.”

...COIN from page 13

got to meet my daughter,” said Fabian. “It was a very high price to pay for the tab that I wear today.”

Fabian graduated Ranger School and proudly wore his tab to Iraq where he reunited with his unit and immediately began operations.

In March, Fabian and another Ranger School graduate decided to put what they learned to use and prepare Ranger-hopefuls in the company with a pre-Ranger School course.

The course covers everything from hand signals to how to keep accountability of men, weapons and equipment to missions including raids, all things Fabian said he believes are important in Ranger School.

“Ranger school doesn’t teach you how to kill somebody with a stick, but it does teach you how to lead and how to take care of Soldiers,” said Fabian.

Fabian said he would even help Soldiers with paperwork

needed to apply to Ranger School.

“I’m trying to do everything for them except putting a tab on their shoulders,” said Fabian. “I learned from my hard times what I need to help these guys.”

It’s not only up to Fabian to push the Soldiers. He said they need to truly want it themselves.

“How far do you want to push yourself when you’re hungry, tired, you’ve been up for two weeks with 45 minutes of sleep, (and) two (meals ready to eat) a day...,” said Fabian. “I can’t teach a man heart; they either have it or they don’t have it.”

Through everything, Fabian gave his whole heart and ended up receiving praise from someone in a position he hopes to be one day.

“(Coleman’s words were) short and precise, but it’s something I will keep forever,” said Fabian. “I will never forget today.”

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FORGE

702nd Brigade Support Battalion



Stryker mechanics, operators keep vehicles rolling at JSS

**Story by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.**

JOINT SECURITY STATION NASIR WA SALAM, Iraq – With grease on their coveralls, wrenches at their sides and a row of Strykers lined up in front of them, the mechanics of 1st Combat Repair Team are ready to do what their name implies: repair combat vehicles.

From the moment a Stryker operator drives his vehicle into the motor pool, the CRT mechanics, part of Company B, 702nd Brigade Support Battalion, work side by side with the Soldiers of 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment “Manchus” here, to fix damaged vehicle as quickly as possible so the infantrymen can get back to their missions.

Spc. Nathaniel Smith, a native of Coffman Cove, Alaska, who’s worked as a mechanic with 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division since he joined the military almost 5 years ago, said it’s easy for CRT Soldiers to work with the “Manchus” because the CRT has supported the battalion with vehicle maintenance since the brigade’s rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La. last June.

“In order to support an actual line unit, you’ve got to know your guys and know how they take care of their stuff,” said Smith, adding that he knows the 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Regt. Soldiers are constantly out on mission and once they return to the JSS, they’ll come straight to the motor pool to have their vehicles fixed.

The mechanics, like Sgt. Larry Bruce, from Benton, Ill., said they’re appreciative of the chance to do their job, even though that means something comes into their shop broken.

“They’re letting us do our job because we’re not going to be proficient unless something breaks, or they tell us something breaks,” said Bruce.

As a way to assist the “Manchus” in better maintenance of their Strykers, Bruce and his Soldiers teach classes on common issues with vehicles and how to resolve them. The infantrymen respond well, said Bruce.

“They ask questions because they want to know more about their vehicles,” he said. “It helps out a lot of those guys and it teaches them to be better operators and how to take care of their equipment.”

Of course, no one can do the job quite like an actual trained mechanic, a fact Pfc. Jeff Basile, from Kings Mountain, N.C., takes pride in.

“I love turning wrenches,” said Basile. “It’s very satisfying knowing the battalion would not run if wasn’t for the mechanics.”

In his nine years as a mechanic in the Army, 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Regt. is one of the best battalions Bruce has ever worked for, he said.

“(The battalion commander and command sergeant major) do everything they can for us to help us out and accept us as family... like we are ‘Manchu warriors,’” he said.

Bruce said he’s used to the “small-town” life at the JSS, and prefers it over “big city living” on places like Victory Base Complex, which houses the rest of Bruce’s battalion.

“Here, we’re a really close-bonded family because all we got’s each other,” said Bruce.

Once the wrenches are turned for the last time and the pumice soap washes away the grease of a long day’s labor, the “Manchu” mechanics of 1st CRT can sleep knowing they are the oil keeping the wheel that is mission of the 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Regt turning smoothly.

Constant commotion in the CRT motor-pool



Pfc. John Buchanan, a mechanic with 1st Combat Repair Team, Company B, 702nd Brigade Support Battalion, searches through his tool bag here, May 20, and looks for the right wrench to use on a bolt inside a Stryker. Buchanan and the rest of the CRT work together with Soldiers from 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment "Manchus," to keep vehicles running and mission ready.



Spc. Angel Hernandez, a mechanic with 1st Combat Repair Team, Company B, 702nd Brigade Support Battalion, fixes a nitrogen pump to the inside of a Stryker, here May 20 to fill the vehicle's nitrogen tanks.



Spc. Michael Gault, a driver with Company B, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, waits to have the pre-dispatch form for his vehicle signed here May 20.



Spc. Nathaniel Smith, a mechanic with 1st Combat Repair Team, Company B, 702nd Brigade Support Battalion, guides the engine of a Stryker into its compartment here May 20.



Pfc. Jeff Basile, a mechanic with 1st Combat Repair Team, Company B, 702nd Brigade Support Battalion, squeezes into the driver's hull of a Stryker to carefully attach the fuel, air and hydraulic hoses to a Stryker engine here May 20.

On the Homefront...



(Left) Members of the 2nd Infantry Division Association: Tom Miller, 38th Inf. Reg.; Rod Wiedinmyer, 9th Inf. Reg.; Ed Leeming, 38th Inf. Reg.; and Bob Kerr, 72nd Tank, render salutes after a Memorial Day wreathlaying ceremony.
(Above) Al Myers, 38th Inf. Reg. plays Taps during a Memorial Day ceremony.



(Clockwise from right)
Lakewood Mayor Doug Richardson and Sandra Norris meet at the Raider Brigade Volunteer Recognition Luncheon.

Everett McCassey, Dawn Braley, Trish Lawrence, Sandra Norris, Ann Leffers, Amy Bieger and Whit Heyward gather at the luncheon to recognize the volunteer efforts of Tribe members. Awardees were presented Stryker charms as tokens of appreciation.

Lady Blackhawks strike a pose for the camera at the Brigade Volunteer Recognition Luncheon.



PRT-Baghdad

MARK POWELL

Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team-West



Thanks in no small measure to the proficiency and professionalism of the Raider Brigade, security conditions in the western outskirts of Baghdad known as Abu Ghraib have improved considerably over the past year.

This progress is real and it is hard-won, but the many interrelated factors necessary to sustain it will remain the work of generations.

No one can take success for granted, nor should we pretend there do not remain murderous groups and individuals determined to overturn the undeniable progress that has been achieved.



Photo by Sgt. Bryce S. Dubee, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

During my year as Team Leader, interagency members of embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (ePRT) Baghdad West (including Department of State, USAID, USDA, U.S. military augmentees, and civilian experts) have proudly worked in partnership with the Raiders in Abu Ghraib and Northwest Baghdad.

Together, we have helped to improve Iraqi civil capacity and governance, reinforced the rule of law, and fostered economic growth at the local level. It has been a tough slog -- often physically and sometimes bureaucratically so -- but a worthwhile one.

Guided by the president's vision of a "stable, sovereign, and self reliant Iraq," and working with our brigade partners on the non-lethal side, we have focused on the sustainable rather than the spectacular.

Our combined efforts have helped to persuade local officials to listen to what Lincoln might have referred to as "the better angels of their nature," by overcoming tribal nepotism and fear to begin confronting well-connected farmers accused of stealing precious water from irrigation canals.

Working with the Raiders, we provided trucks and work crews to clean garbage and make minor repairs to roads when Iraqi authorities lacked the capacity to do so on their own.

We continue to collaborate in an ambitious effort to help Abu Ghraib reach its vast farming potential by approaching the agricultural sector holistically to better match reality, resources, and requirements.

We support the Raiders' initiative to provide greenhouses -- and we have added the training to utilize them properly -- to nearly 300 farmers throughout Abu Ghraib.

In keeping with the ongoing drawdown of U.S. forces in Iraq, and with continuing progress towards a normal bilateral relationship with the Iraqi government, ePRT West will fold its tent on June 1, 2010.

In its place will be a smaller forward presence of

PRT-Baghdad, which currently leads U.S. government civil capacity efforts throughout the province, including Abu Ghraib.

PRT-Baghdad will continue working closely with the Raiders.

I would like to offer my sincere and profound gratitude for the support, the sacrifices, and the camaraderie of the Raider Brigade, from the Command Group to the resolute Soldiers who provided our daily protection, and without whom we simply would not be able to function in this improving, though still dangerous, environment.

It has been an honor to work with you, and I wish each of you a safe return to Joint Base Lewis-McChord upon completion of your current deployment.



Photo by Sgt. Bryce S. Dubee, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

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“We appreciate the efforts that were exerted to build this place,” said Jabar Chechani, the council leader for Nasir Wa Salam, speaking through a translator. “The Nasir Wa Salam health center will provide health services to the (local) area and areas surrounding it.”

He also recognized the other efforts of U.S. forces, especially those of of the 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Reg.

“This is a great project that ties together us and the community,” said Capt. Derek Noel, commander of Co. B. “Now that the clinic is finally complete, the local (community) can see the (whole) picture.



Photo by Spc. Luisito Brooks, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.
Jabar Chechani, the council leader for Nasir Wa Salam cuts a ribbon marking the re-opening of the newly rebuilt Nasir Wa Salam Clinic, June 7.

On the back cover:

ABU GHRAIB, Iraq – Soldiers from 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division feed alfalfa hay to cows that were donated to the University of Baghdad College of Veterinary Medicine here May 26. Students of the college will use the cows for artificial insemination studies.

Photo by Spc. Luisito Brooks, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf Div.





STRYKER BRIGADE...

...TO THE OBJECTIVE!!!