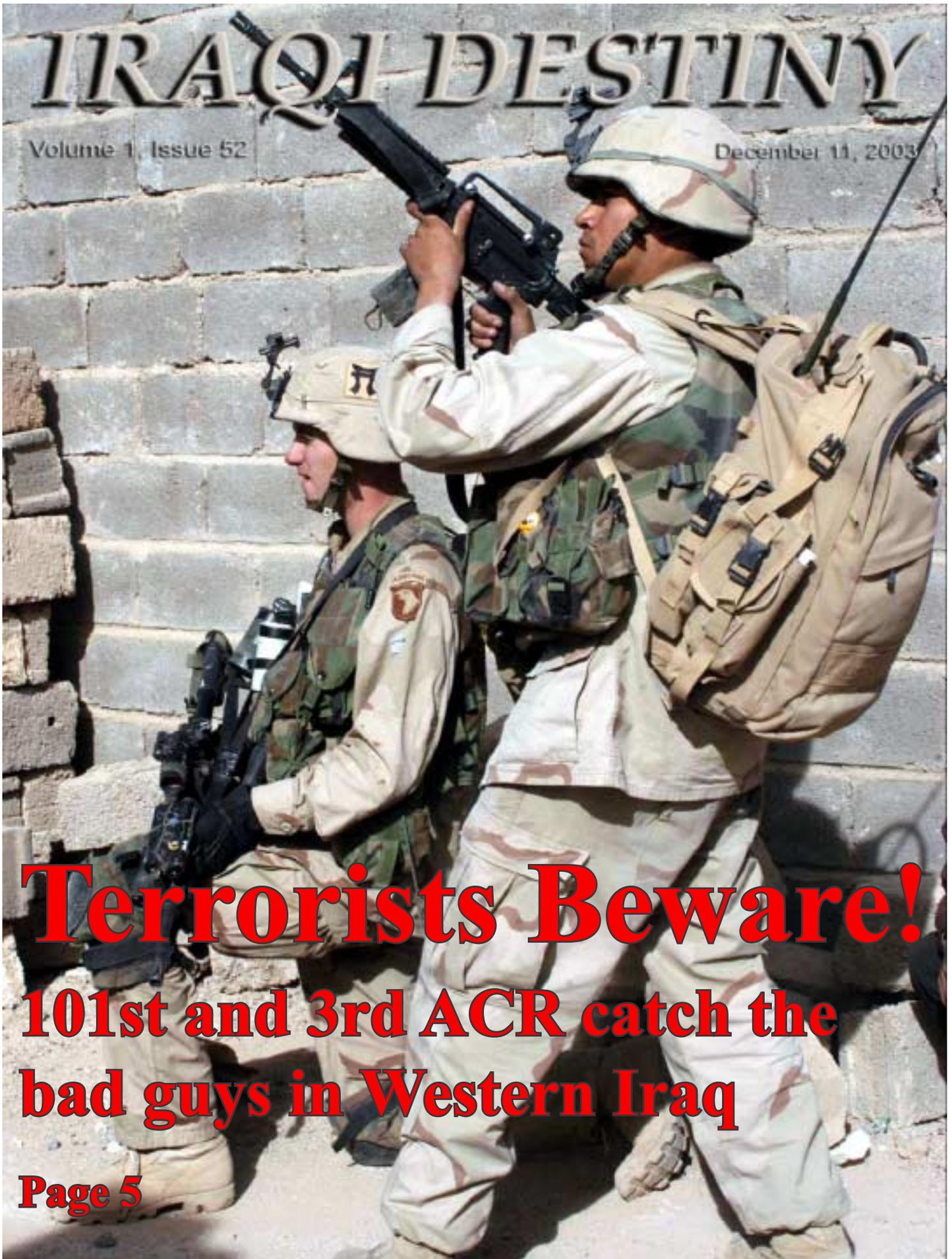


IRAQI DESTINY

Volume 1, Issue 52

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Terrorists Beware!

101st and 3rd ACR catch the bad guys in Western Iraq

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Commentary

A final farewell to a fallen hero

by Command Sgt. Maj. William Hoffer
Army News Service

ALEXANDRIA, Va. -- Late last month, Maj. Gen. James Grazioplene, the Army's G8 and I represented the Army at the funeral of Pfc. Richard William Hafer, 320th Field Artillery Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Blairsville, Pa. Blairsville is a very small town with patriotic roots that date back to the Civil War.

We met the soldier's father, step mother, mother, other relatives and friends.

The First United Methodist Church was packed. Members of the 99th Regional Readiness Command from Pittsburgh were the pallbearers and firing squad. They were all superb in their professionalism and actions.

Many from the community were in attendance; a high school principal, Rick's high school friends, and many from his football team. Rick Hafer was 6-foot 5-inches tall, weighed 270 in school where he also wrestled.

The total number of Soldiers visiting in class A uniform that day were about 25.

Sgt. Davis and Spc. Quintal from the 320th FAR from Fort Campbell were also present. They represented the division. Davis presented Mr. Kafer a photo album and transcript of the ceremony that had taken place in Mosul. Spc. Quintal presented Mrs. Hafer a quilt from the 101st plus a photo of their son. It was a very touching moment for all and reinforced the link between the family and the division.

The night before the funeral, Sgt. Ted Lawrence from the 320th arrived from Mosul. He was Rick Hafer's best friend. Lawrence spoke with Gen. Grazioplene and me for about 45 minutes that night.

During the church services the next day, Lawrence stood up at the podium and really did a super job on describing his friend as person. Soldier and friend, it was really moving and many in the audience were weeping.

Gen. Grazioplene also gave a very heart-felt speech at the church, linked the history of the "Screaming Eagles" from World War II to present day Iraq and the pride and brotherhood shared.

When the orders were posted and read by Maj. Fletcher from the Army G1, the entire congregation stood as one. Gen. Grazioplene and I awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart Medals to Rick's father.

This was a very emotional moment for all, with Rick's body and casket only a couple feet away.

The Rev. Fred Craig was right on target with his delivery. After the church ceremony we loaded our vehicles and drove to the cemetery, which was about a mile and half away.

Throughout the town, VFW members (some from World War II) were standing holding American flags.

Our nation's flag was positioned all along the road up to the cemetery entrance.

A bagpipe player dressed in his traditional outfit stood off to the side of a hill overlooking the cemetery playing his bagpipes. It was a sunny blue clear sky and about 34 degrees with a slight breeze.

Approximately 15 Soldiers lined up beside the pallbearers as they removed the flag draped casket from the vehicle.... we stood at the position of attention and presented arms.

It was then that I noticed the incredible impact our actions made to the relatives and friends who stood in a semi circle around us.

It had a profound impact on all of us as well. The best way I can describe the moment was that we stood proud as the Army honored its own.

We honored one man who gave his life defending us. It was a very touching moment that I will never forget.

After the services were completed at the gravesite, relatives, friends and Soldiers hugged.

They departed to the VFW hall for a meal. Many, very evident by the tears shed by many women and men that day, loved this soldier, Pfc. Rick Hafer.

I am absolutely sure as we honor the fallen throughout our country; the same honors are being given as those given to Rick Hafer, his family, relatives and friends.

We will never forget him and our other brave comrades for as long as we live.

(Editor's note: Command Sgt. Maj. Hoffer is the U.S. Army Human Resources command sergeant major)

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On the front: Husaybah, Iraq - Two Iron Rakkasan infantrymen from the 101st Airborne Division pull security during a raid to capture terrorists and former regime loyalists Nov. 24. (Photo by Sgt. Robert Woodward)

Commentary

One soldier's mid-tour leave experience

Americans still support the troops and aren't afraid to show it

by Spc. Joshua M. Risner
40th PAD

I was recently given the opportunity to go home for mid-tour leave. Needless to say, I was excited to be able to set foot on American soil for the first time in nearly nine months.

It was something that kept me up at night, planning what I would do in that two weeks and how great it was going to be.

One thing made me wonder, though. As a Public Affairs soldier, I have a lot of access to the news. The media back home, as I had seen time and time again, seemed to be uninterested in what went on in Iraq -- unless someone had died.

As a journalist and editor of the Iraqi Destiny, I have covered and published these deaths and memorials, but I have tried as hard as I can to make sure that the good things do not go unnoticed. Though the international media has not paid as much attention to the stories that my team and I have, I still felt I was doing my part to get the word out about the good things we have done and are still doing in Iraq.

As I flew out of Mosul on a C-130, I wondered how I would be received when I made it back to the states. Judging from the state of the media, I couldn't really be sure. I didn't expect to be spit upon and called a "baby killer," but I wondered how much the people would care.

As my plane lifted off from the Kuwaiti desert, I figured that I would find out the answer soon enough.

It didn't take long for me to realize just how much support the American people are giving us.

We got off the plane in Baltimore to cheers, "welcome home" signs and anxious loved ones. People offered us drinks, phone cards, anything they thought we might want or need. People I had never seen before were coming up to me and telling how proud they were of me and the rest of the soldiers in Iraq.

I didn't really know how to react. I was as polite and humble as I could be while shaking the hands of total strangers and having conversations about the situation here and what I thought could be done to fix it.

The people were curious to get my perspective on what it was like in Iraq and were surprised for the most part to hear that I didn't think it was as bad as the media had made it out to be. They were also surprised when I told them about all the good things going on that the media chose not to report on.

During the two weeks I was at home, I was overwhelmed by the show of support from people I knew and from perfect strangers. They may not have all supported the war, they may not have agreed with the policies on Iraq, but one thing was for sure: they cared about us and they weren't afraid or ashamed to tell me so.

For all of those people out here, isolated from the world around them, I can tell you this: the American people have not forgotten you and they still show their support.



courtesy photo

Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) step off the plane at Baltimore Washington International Airport to begin their mid-tour leave.

Troops honor fallen engineer

by Pfc. Chris Jones
40th PAD

QAYARRAH, Iraq -- Soldiers of Company C, 52nd Engineer Battalion, an Army Reserve unit attached to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), held a memorial ceremony Thursday in Qayarrah for Spc. David Goldberg, killed by non-hostile gunfire last week.

Goldberg, 20, an engineer in Company C's 3rd Platoon, 2nd Squad, joined the Army February in hopes of deploying to the Middle East with the 52nd, stationed at Fort Carson, Colo., said his squad leader, Staff Sgt. Fernando Torrez.

"He volunteered to go to war to do his job," Torrez said. "He told me he wanted this experience to help him become a better person... in the short time we knew him, we saw a young man with terrific potential."

According to fellow soldiers, Goldberg's spirit was always bigger than his body.

"Though small in stature, you could often see him flexing his muscles to the biggest soldiers in the company, saying that he was bigger," said Capt. Frank Hopkins, Company C commander.

Goldberg was also seen as an idealistic, reflective soldier who was often musing over philosophy.

"What I remember most about Spc. Goldberg is that he was always asking questions about life, and he searched for answers from his fellow soldiers," said 1st Lt. James French, Goldberg's platoon leader. "He was always interested in world events and how they related to the general public."

Goldberg served with the 52nd Engineer Battalion throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom, from the unit's arrival in Kuwait in February to the seven months the soldiers spent in Qayarrah.



photos by Pfc. Chris Jones

(Above) 1st Sgt. Stanley Bird, Company C, 52nd Engineer Battalion first sergeant, is the last to leave the memorial ceremony of Spc. David Goldberg, a soldier in his company. Goldberg's memory stands on display by the grouping of his boots, rifle, helmet and dog tags. (Above Left) Soldiers of Company C, 52nd Engineer Battalion, attached to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) stand in a silent prayer during the memorial ceremony for Spc. David Goldberg, an engineer in Co. C who took his own life last week. Goldberg's helmet, rifle, boots and dogtags are on display in front of the soldiers in the traditional grouping for a fallen U.S. soldier.

101st, 3rd ACR root out terrorists, insurgents

by Sgt. Robert Woodward
101st Abn. Div. (AAst.) PAO

HUSAYBAH, IRAQ -- The squad of infantrymen waited in darkness, surrounded by the reverberating mechanical whirr and clanking of the beast that bore them across the desert in its belly.

The commander of the armored vehicle gave word over the intercom: One minute to target. In the cramped space below the soldiers adjusted the night-optical devices mounted to their helmets, moved their weapons to the ready, and leaned forward, tension building. Abruptly, the vehicle stopped.

“Action left! Action left!” yelled the squad’s leader, Staff Sgt. Ray Munden, as the heavy armored door lowered to the ground, becoming the ramp the men ran down as they exited.

Turning left, the squad charged down an unpaved alley, aiming rifles at doors, gates and rooftops for security. Turning the corner, they skirted a wall. On the wall, a door, and on the other side, their target—a rugged stone and mortar home hiding suspected terrorists.

On point, Sgt. Philip Faulk crashed through the door into the courtyard, the rest of the squad close behind, rifles pointed toward windows and shadows, each member taking a sector of fire. A figure at the door drew their attention.

Commands and gestures to get down, lie on the ground, and hold arms away from the body shot out from several soldiers as they advanced toward the figure. One soldier flexi-cuffed the suspect for detainment, and others moved deeper into the house, cleared each room, then began searching for weapons, documents or other evidence of anti-coalition involvement.

For the Iron Rakkasans of the 101st Airborne Division, that raid and numerous others in the pre-dawn of Nov. 20 marked the beginning of yet another mission in yet another dirty, lawless Iraqi town. Located in the extreme west of Iraq on the border with Syria, the town of Husaybah had become a hub for an assortment of unsavory characters who began to operate there in the months after Saddam Hussein fell from power.

Some of them were smugglers who profited by bringing contraband, including weapons, across the border. Some were members of the old regime who plotted resistance. Perhaps the most dangerous were the foreign disruptors who recruited

and staged attacks in Husaybah, hid weapons in fields and wadis, and slinked into Syria when U.S. forces came looking.

Husaybah was the wild west of Iraq, not unlike the rough-and-tumble El Paso, Texas of the 1800s—except the border here was with Syria, not Mexico, and the bandits were armed with automatic rifles, rocket-

propelled grenades, and anti-tank mines.

The once quiet city grew steadily more violent, culminating in October with more than 100 attacks on the beleaguered soldiers of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, said Capt. Justin Brown, com-

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Sgt. Robert Woodward

An infantryman rides in back of an armored personnel carrier en route to another raid in Husaybah, guided by pilots in a UH-58 Kiowa Warrior helicopter. Since Nov. 20, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment has been operationally connected from the 101st Airborne Division to the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, helping to quell terrorist activities that have become common in the border town.



Courtesy photo

Lt. Col. Chester Egert (right), division chaplain, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), stands with Dr. Saleh Khalif, director of religious affairs in Mosul, in front of a pile of boxes filled with heaters donated by the 101st to religious sites across Northern Iraq. More than 200 heaters were donated to keep Iraqi mosques and churches warm in the upcoming winter months.

101st donates heaters to Iraqi religious sites

by Pfc. Chris Jones
40th PAD

MOSUL, Iraq -- The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) donated more than 200 kerosene heaters over the last week to religious leaders across Northern Iraq to help keep mosques and churches in Nineveh Province warm during the winter months.

After visiting several religious buildings in Mosul, Lt. Col. Chester Egert, 101st division chaplain, found many of these sites had ineffective heating systems that needed repaired or replaced by December.

Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, 101st Airborne Division commander, said donating heaters to religious sites in Iraq is but one

way Coalition Forces can continue to win the hearts and minds of Iraqi citizens.

"[Petraeus] refers to it as 'the charm offensive,'" Egert said. "We're still trying to completely win the local citizens over."

The heaters were donated in two chunks -- the first 100 last week and the second 100 Wednesday. Along with Mosul, two other cities where the 101st Airborne Division is lodged, Quayarah and Tallafar, were given 25 heaters each to disperse among the worship sites in the area. Wednesday, Egert met with Dr. Saleh Khalif, director of religious affairs in Mosul. The two spoke about the future of religion in Iraq and how the donation of heaters was a gesture of kindness not soon to be forgotten by those in prayer at the religious buildings during the cold winter months.

One of the primary goals for Coalition Forces in Iraq is and has always been to improve the state of living for all Iraqi citizens, as well as gaining their trust and respect, Egert said.

New health clinic, road opened in remote Northern Iraq town

by Pfc. Thomas Day
40th Public Affairs Detachment

TALABTAH, Iraq -- The town of Talabtah, located 50 barren kilometers southwest of Mosul, does not get a whole lot of visitors. Monday was an exception, and with a new road project connecting the remote town with Mosul, the town may be seeing a lot more visitors in the near future.

Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) commanding general, cut two ribbons in Talabtah Monday – one opening the road reconstruction project and another opening a new health clinic in the village. The health clinic, a \$28,000 Commanders Emergency Relief Fund project, is now open and ready for business.

The currently dilapidated road will now be resurfaced with asphalt and widened with new shoulders, pending the necessary funding. The road's potholes have already been repaired.

"The total project, pending funding, is probably going to take about six months," said 2nd Lt. Rush Robert of Lumberton, N.C., 326th Engineering Battalion. "Once it's completed, it's going to enable safe travel from Talabtah to Mosul."

The health clinic is just the highlight of a number of goodwill initiatives by American soldiers in the village. Boxes of school supplies, toys, winter clothes and blankets were delivered to Talabtah homes by 101st Airborne Division soldiers, supplied by 25 church groups in Darlington and Florence, S.C. – home of Maj. Trey Bird, 5-101st Aviation Regiment.

"All total, we've been able to get something to about 300 families," Bird said. Additional heaters have also been distributed through local Mosques for the cold winter months.

The projects were sponsored by Col. Ben Hodges and his 327th Infantry Regiment and Lt. Col. Laura Richardson, 5-101st Aviation Regiment commander. Both Hodges and Richardson joined Petraeus and the local mayor at the opening ceremonies.

Petraeus praised both the mayor and Richardson for their work. "Everyone who works for me tells me you are doing a wonderful job," Petraeus told the mayor. Of Richardson, the 101st CG joked to the locals, "she's the one that keeps getting me to spend more money on you."



Pfc. Thomas Day

Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) commanding general, flashes his cheerful smile before opening a new road project connecting the remote Talabtah with Mosul.

Anti-corruption commission established in Mosul

by Pfc. Thomas Day
40th PAD

MOSUL, Iraq (Dec. 10, 2003) – November 1 marked the beginning of what one U.S. reserve officer called the “American version of the ‘Untouchables.’” That day the Mosul Anti-Corruption Commission met for the first time with the task of cleaning the local government at all levels of foul play.

“Their mission is to target, investigate and prosecute corruption at all levels of government in Ninevah,” said Lt. Col. John Bell, a reserve officer attached to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Office of the Staff Judge Advocate. “It doesn’t matter if they are at the highest level of government or the lowest level.”

Bell, a civilian judge in Cock County, Tenn., has worked with the commission since its inception. The commission is comprised of 16 people, all local attorneys, and organized into three five-member teams. Mr. Walid Kashmooli chairs the commission.

“It’s the first one of its kind. It’s the first separate agency to work strictly with corruption in Iraq,” Bell said.

The idea for the commission came from Lt. Col. Richard Whitaker, 101st Airborne Staff Judge Advocate, and was blueprinted by Capt. Rick Taylor. Coalition and local officials in Baghdad are now looking to the Mosul commission as a model for future anti-corruption commissions.

The threat of attack from enemies of the coalition will be a fact of life for anti-corruption commission, and sixteen body guards are currently undergoing training in Baghdad for the members. The members are more concerned with fighting corruption than any potential risks. “The people want to fight courage in their government,” said Mr. Saad-Mohammed Mekhler. “If you ask the people in Mosul how they feel about this, they would be happy.”

Corruption will be fought in six categories, according to Bell: bribery, embezzlement, unlawful imprisonment, tampering, abuse of power and hindering prosecution. Corruption cases can be reported at the commission’s office, by a simple letter, or by a hotline that has been established, according to Kashmooli. False accusations will themselves be charged with hindering prosecution.

“It’s an ambitious project, but we’ll do this one case at a time,” Bell said. “You’ll never stop all corruption, but it will slow it down.”

Agents with the Federal Bureau of Investigations have also assisted in the project as consultants. The commission does not have a shelf life; it is awaiting the signatures of Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) commanding general, and Gov. Ghanim al-Basso, governor of the Ninevah Province, to become a permanent fixture in the local government.

The commission has already asserted themselves in Mosul. Two cases have already been prosecuted by the commission and “several major cases” are being investigated currently.



Pfc. Thomas Day

Lt. Col. John Bell meets with the Mosul Anti-Corruption Commission at the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Main Compound.

Festival at Hatra ruins marks end of Ramadan

by Spc. Mary Rose Xenikakis
22nd MPAD

HATRA, Iraq -- Soldiers, local patrons and international media danced to traditional dances, sang customary songs and ate a feast of both American and Iraqi food in Hatra as the sun went down on the ancient city.

The celebrations ended the Ramadan season and brought in the Christmas season Dec. 6 (Saturday). The events throughout the evening included a presentation from Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, commanding general, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and Hatras mayor, Nofil Hamade Sultan, and a dinner with seasonal music and slide show, which ended the festivities of the evening.

The evening at the Hatra ruins was a celebration to show the friendship and the working relationship between the Iraqis of Hatra and the Coalition forces, according to Petraeus.

"The walls of Hatra remind us of Iraq's past," Petraeus said. "This evening we celebrate that past, your history and your traditions. We celebrate the end of Ramadan, the beginning of the Christmas season and our part in your history."

In the presentation given by the 101st Commanding General he spoke about the progress the people have made in the city of Hatra.

"A few months ago in the city I watched a citizen from Hatra

present the first brass canister, of many, from the Jaguar Ammunition Point. The brass was sold and the money was used to purchase supplies for the schools in the districts," he said. "That project has now grown into the Hatra Brass Recovery Company, a private company owned by Iraqis. One who shares its profits between the members of the company and the citizens of Hatra. This company and many efforts like it throughout Ninevah province and all of Iraq demonstrate what is possible when everyone works together."

He said the people of Hatra have grown because they have opened their eyes to new people and new traditions.

"This celebration is also an opportunity to demonstrate our continued commitment to the people of Hatra and the people of Ninevah province," Petraeus said. "By continuing to work together Iraq can continue to grow, to flourish and to be free."

With all the participants in the celebrations sitting at tables throughout the courtyard of the ruins the mayor also gave a presentation to those who have helped in making the festivities possible.

"I give thanks to the soldier's effort for making Hatra better and better everyday. We hope to continue this for a new and better Iraq," said Nofil.

The towering walls and pillars of crumbling stone gave a surreal feel to the traditional dance and food and conversation between the different cultures. Hatra, the ancient city just South West of Mosul, which dates back to 300 B.C. has now been re-opened to tourism after many years.



Capt. Scott Himes

Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) gives a presentation to attendees at the Dec. 6 celebration at the Hadra ruins.

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mander of Apache Troop, 1st Squadron, 3rd ACR. During the first three months of operating in the area, there were typically two attacks a month.

According to Brown, the number of attacks began to rise sharply in August and peaked in October with five or six attacks a day. During that time, one soldier in the 3rd ACR was killed and about 40 more wounded.

"Attacks started to come at day as well as night, and they would vary their methods," said 1st Lt. Mike Forbes, Apache Troop's executive officer. "Sometimes they would use IEDs and others land mines, sometimes RPGs with small arms and other times mortars. We also started seeing two elements coordinating with different kinds of weapons synchronously."

Threats to the families of people who worked with U.S. forces were a part of the anti-coalition strategy to intimidate the local population, said "Omar," a local translator who worked with the task force in Husaybah. Omar also claimed an RPG had been fired into his home.

The police in Husaybah proved ineffective, as they were unwilling to enforce laws that would draw the ire of anti-coalition elements, or the revenge of the tribe or family of a suspect.

According to Omar, vigilante retribution is an ancient part of Arabic culture.

At one point during the escalating violence, armed thugs walked into the Husaybah police station and occupied it—without firing a shot. They ordered the police to stop working with Americans, and the orders were obeyed.

Completing the picture of lawlessness, the passive city council could not keep the position of police chief filled with an aggressive leader. Of the only two proactive chiefs the town ever knew, one was killed and the other badly wounded by enemy attacks.

After a company of infantry from the 82nd Airborne Division was sent to support the 3rd ACR, patrols and raids increased, and the police station was retaken and occupied.

"We were always under fire at the station and after that when we moved into the old Ba'ath Party headquarters across the street," said Sgt. Joshua Collins, a team leader in the 82nd Abn. Div. "There were sustained firefights, and we were mortared regularly. They were accurate."

The 3rd ACR, with its Abrams tanks, Bradley armored fighting vehicles, and Kiowa Warrior and Apache helicopters, maintained a strong presence with patrols to ensure that anti-coalition behavior

would not go unchecked. But it could not root out the hardliners, who had developed techniques to avoid capture.

Collins expressed frustration with fruitless raids in Husaybah. He explained that it was easy to run and hide in another part of the city when U.S. forces approached, and weapons were probably hidden elsewhere. When a target was searched, soldiers often would find no reason to detain him. At night, the same individual could just go out to a field and dig up his weapons, use them in hit-and-run attacks, rebury them and return to his home in the city—an apparently innocent man.

"We needed to increase our (operational) tempo throughout the town," Forbes said. "We needed to have a presence everywhere in the city at once in order to isolate and search all Husaybah."

So a decision was made. To control Husaybah, the 3rd ACR needed to complement its tracked vehicles, tactically limited in an urban environment, with many more feet on the ground.

That's why the Iron Rakkasans came to town.

Once the 3rd Battalion of the 187th Infantry Regiment was brought into the task force, the cavalry could do what it does best—security, surveillance and mobile patrols, said Forbes. Prior to their arrival, raids would take troops off their mounts and onto targets, cutting the number of tracked vehicles in action.

"The combination of light and heavy forces in this previously volatile city has proven to be a very effective force," said Maj. Dave Beachman, the Iron Rakkasans' executive officer, several days into the operation. "We have proven that the right mixture of compassion and firmness is far more effective than blunt violence."

"The key is that our platoons are more surgical," said 2nd Lt. Eric Alexander, an Iron Rakkasan platoon leader. "We can carefully administer levels of aggression or goodwill in ways that large vehicles with large weapons systems can't. Put together we're a great team because we get the whole spectrum of force application."

According to Iron Rakkasan commander Lt. Col. Joseph Buche, the infantry gives the coalition a more human face. "It's every soldier's charge to talk to and work with the people," he said.

On missions, soldiers could be seen passing out candy or soccer balls, covering women and children with blankets, shaking hands with men, talking about their families, handing out money in exchange for cooperation, and taking complaints.

"If we leave this kind of thing to civil affairs, we'd be missing an opportunity to

gain the people's trust," said Buche. "After all, success for us isn't just accomplishing our objectives—it's setting things up for the guys who will remain here when we leave. We've given them a new perch from which to fly."

By Dec. 28, the border crossing had been reopened and every building in Husaybah, home to more than 10,000 Sunni Muslims, had been searched. At least seven cell-leaders had been captured along with an influential former regime loyalist, Maj. Gen. Abed Hamid. The task force detained at least 100 other suspects and found numerous weapons and munitions in and around the city.

Two days of presence patrols and searches outside the city for weapons caches brought the operation to a close, and the Iron Rakkasans prepared to head home.

The town was quiet once again. The wary eyes that greeted soldiers on patrol were now replaced by smiles and waves. Hope was returning to Husaybah as civil-military operations began again, in earnest.

Increased funding and improved security will allow coalition forces a window of opportunity to improve things, said Maj. Paul Phillips, Husaybah's civil affairs team chief, who looks forward to expanding his operation.

"Unemployment is rampant, which makes an offer of \$20 to attack U.S. forces very attractive," said Phillips. "We must give them something to do and put money in their pockets."

Phillips plans to hire residents to improve the town's water and school systems, recruit hundreds more policemen, and rebuild the border checkpoint. Perhaps most importantly, Phillips' team will refurbish a prominent fertilizer plant that currently employs 600, but at full capacity has about 3,900 employees.

"Can we do enough to win over the people in what time we have before the infiltrators resurface?" asked Phillips. "Time will tell."

Other soldiers echoed similar concerns about maintaining the same level of security after the Iron Rakkasans have left Husaybah.

"We captured most of their leaders and for the first time began to enlist the help of the people in this town," he said. "We're not in a position to say that everything's fixed. There's still a lot of hard work to do."

"We are embarked on a journey, not a destination," said Buche of the longevity of the operation's success. "Only time will tell."

On Dec. 1, the Iron Rakkasans climbed in the back of open troop carriers and, amid the wind and rain of the convoy, speculated. What dirty, lawless Iraqi town would they wind up in next? Fallujah? Mosul?

Time will tell.

Could you have leishmaniasis?

The doctor illustrates the symptoms

by Lt. Col (M.D.) Michael L. Place
Div. Surgeon's Office

Leishmaniasis (leesh muh nigh uh sis) is hard to say, let alone understand. But with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) returning from Iraq, families of service members should know how to recognize this infection.

Known since antiquity as the "Baghdad boil," leishmaniasis is very common in Iraq.

In fact, most Iraqis consider leishmaniasis a childhood illness much like ear infections or chicken pox in America. Most commonly, leishmaniasis is recognized as

an open sore that will not heal for several weeks.

Family members and soldiers should look for persistent sores in order to ensure their loved ones are evaluated for this disease.

The transmission of leishmaniasis is through the bite of an infected sand fly, which measures out at about one third the size of a mosquito. Insect-to-human transfer of disease is common throughout the world, with notorious diseases such as malaria and West Nile Virus being good examples.

Once the leishmania parasite gets into the body, there are a variety of different ways that it can cause disease.

In Iraq, the most common form is the

cutaneous, or skin, form. Rarely, the parasites attack the internal organs. In general, the precise species of the parasite determines which form of disease is encountered, but this relationship is not absolute.

Military medical personnel recognized this threat before deployment and worked with commanders to provide all of our soldiers with the Department of Defense's Insect Repellent System.

This system is a combination of high quality insect repellent and an insecticide that is incorporated into uniforms and insect nets.

When used properly, this system is extremely effective in preventing diseases transmitted by insects.

Despite these efforts, about 20 Screaming Eagles and over 150 other members of the Coalition have contracted leishmaniasis.

More are likely to be diagnosed in the future since the sores develop weeks to more than 6 months after the bite of the infected sand fly.

While only very rarely life-threatening, the Department of Defense can provide the best evaluation and care for these soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC.

As the Army's flagship hospital and the home of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, these soldiers will receive state of the art evaluations, treatment and provide much needed information about this unusual disease. After treatment, all soldiers will resume their duties with their unit.

Importantly, this disease is not thought to be transmitted from person to person through casual contact.

Even so, most medical providers would recommend that all open wounds should be covered and routinely cleaned to prevent getting the wound infected.

Others should avoid contact with wounds for the same reason.

For more information about leishmaniasis, the United States Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (USACHPPM) has some great information and pictures available at: <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/ento/FACTS/Leishmaniasis.pdf>

The Judge Says...

Items of legal interest to soldiers

Q: My car is a clunker! Does the lemon law apply?

A: *The term "lemon law" refers to state-specific laws that apply to new motor vehicles. If your new car has the same mechanical problem over and over again, or if it is out of service for a significant period of time, and repeated attempts to fix it have been unsuccessful, your car may be considered a "lemon," and you may be able to force the manufacturer to take it back and replace it, or provide a refund.*

The refund issued under the lemon law may not be 100% of the purchase price, as there may be an offset for the consumer's use of the vehicle.

Lemon laws differ from state to state, but generally speaking, if your new car has a problem that cannot be repaired after three or four attempts, or it is out of service for a total of 30-45 days, then the lemon law applies.

Only new cars, "new" as defined by that state, are covered by lemon laws, but there may be warranty coverage for used cars.

If you have car problems that might qualify for lemon law coverage, speak to an attorney on the law that applies in your state.

Q: What is Alabama's lemon law?

A: *Alabama's lemon law covers a vehicle within one year of its delivery to the consumer, or during the first 12,000 miles of operation, whichever occurs first.*

The lemon law applies if the same problem cannot be fixed after three or more attempts, or if the vehicle is out of service and in custody of the manufacturer or dealer for a total of 30 days.

Replacement or a refund is up to the consumer.

Preventive law tip of the week:

"Work from home" scams claim that you can make thousands of dollars at home, stuffing envelopes or assembling products like dolls or pens.

This usually requires payment of a small up-front fee or that you purchase of several hundred dollars worth of parts and equipment.

When you send in the finished product however, the company claims that your work is of poor quality and terminates your employment.

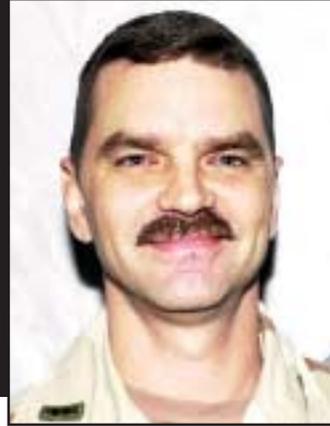
Bottom line: never pay money to make money.

Man on the Street

What are you doing to prepare for redeployment?



“Just packing all of my gear.”
- Pfc. Jason Woodward of Wagner, Okla., 501st Signal Battalion



“We’re trying to figure out ways to hand over all our projects.”
- CW2 Art Newsome of Milan, Tenn., 501st Signal Bn.

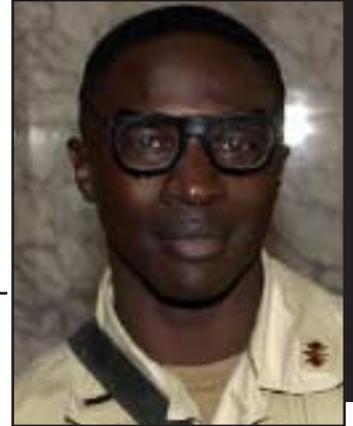
“Helping to write the plan.”

- Capt. John McLaughlin of Hawthorne, N.Y., Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) G-3 Office



“We’re getting everything packed up, doing all our inventory.”

- 1st Lt. Terrance Wright of Charleston, S.C., 37th Engineer Bn.



“Just having the proper mindset.”
- Spc. Chris McFann of Bellfontaine, Ohio, 101st Abn. Div. (AAslt.) Band



“Making sure every soldier’s SRP packet has the documents needed.”
- Spc. Josh Griego of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., 501st Signal Bn.