# Commando Update

Volume 1 ~ Issue 2 | 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Divison | January 2010

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# Wounded Soldiers return, inspire others

*By Sgt. Jennie Burrett*
*2nd BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div., MND-B*

BAGHDAD– In past wars, wounded warriors, especially those recovering from severe injuries, were never afforded the opportunity to re-visit the locations where they had been injured or the hospitals in theater where they had been treated.

Five wounded warriors returned here to visit with Soldiers of 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, through "Operation Proper Exit", Dec. 30, at Contingency Operation Post Carver.

Some wounded Soldiers have said that when they left the combat zone, they had left their unit behind and they had left something unfinished.

The program, in essence, gives the Soldier a sense of closure, allowing them to "leave the battlefield the right way"

"There are several steps to-

*See ~ Operation Proper Exit ~Pg. 4*

*U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jennie Burrett*

*Sgt. 1st Class Michael Schlitz (center), of Moline, Ill., a former Soldier with 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, shows off his mechanical arms during a visit to Contingency Operation Post Carver, Dec. 30.*

# Zafaranya Essential Services Conference

*By Sgt. Jennie Burrett*
*2nd BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div., MND-B*

BAGHDAD – The National Chemical Plastic Industry water treatment facility held an essential services conference with the civic leaders of the surrounding mahalas, a member of the Baghdad Provincial Council, a Karada District Council member and a representative of the Baghdad Water Authority in Zafaraniya Jan. 18 to acknowledge their successful cooperation.

The purpose of the conference was to show the progress of the renovation and inform the local leaders of the benefits that the facility, which was initially funded by U.S. forces, will bring to the surrounding area through increased drinking water and support to local businesses.

"This project; by hiring workers, maintaining and rehabilitating this water facility; takes water from the Tigris River, south of Zafaranya and supplies it to the Al Rabee area, in Mahala 961," said Mohammed Al-Rubeiy, the Chairman of Planning Commission strategy in the Baghdad Provincial Council. "There are future plans and future projects for combined work between our council and the coalition forces. Today, we are here to oversee the progress in this project"

When the facility is working at full capacity, it will carry 500 cubic meters of water per hour. It will provide 300 cubic meters of water service to 16

*See ~ 2-15 Essential Services~Pg. 4*

*U.S. Army photo by Georges Aboumrad*

*Mohamad Ibraheem, an engineer for National Chemical Plastic Industry Company, takes Lt. Col. Michael Davey, of Peru, N.Y., the deputy commander of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, on a tour of the facility Jan. 18, showing the operations and improvements being made in the water treatment facility. The facility project is 78-percent complete and is scheduled to be operational in the next 30 days.*

**Dear Commando Soldiers,**
**Family members and friends,**

Believe it or not, the 100 day mark in our deployment has already passed. I was reminded of this while attending an awards and re-enlistment ceremony our Engineer Company held. The commander, Capt. Thrasher, talked about the fact that the Army considers the "first 100 days" of deployment the most critical.

The Army states this because the dangers to us are greatest when we are getting used to our new environment and conditions, both deployed and at the home front.

The company commander offered that, while this is probably true, he was more concerned about the "second 100 days." This is because once we get comfortable in our environment, complacency and fatigue can creep up on us causing us to drop our guard, cut corners and fail to execute the basics to standard. Only bad things happen if we let this occur, deployed and at home.

I've paraphrased the commander's words and added a few of my own thoughts, but I could not agree more with the basic gist of what he said. With these thoughts in mind, I want to comment on the last and next 100 days and what they mean to the Commandos.

Over the past 100 days, we have established ourselves as stalwart, reliable partners with our Iraqi Security Force brothers as we help them secure the population, defeat violent extremists and help government and economic progress. This is our mission and it is important.

This period included two major Islamic holidays, passing of the election law and a number of other major events. During this time, violent extremists and terrorists/rejectionists have repeatedly attacked or attempted to attack the people and the government. They have failed every time in achieving any significant effect. You are a primary reason for the enemy's failure. From partnered operations in and out of the city, detaining High Value Targets, finding countless weapons caches, denying indirect fire attempts and much more; you have kept the pressure on the enemy and knocked them off balance. Your training of the Iraqis has increased their ability to operate on their own. Your efforts in the community, providing everything from greenhouses to water treatment plants, have increased the Iraqi population's faith in government and the future.

In the 100 days in front of us we face a few extremely important milestones. These are the Iraqi elections in March, the seating of the government in the months after the elections and transition of our area to follow on forces, U.S. and Iraqi. We cannot let complacency or fatigue prevent us from allowing these milestones to occur by accomplishing our mission of protecting the population, defeating violent extremists and facilitating government and economics, all through our partners.

So how do we do this; keep complacency and fatigue from knocking us off our game? I offer four critical factors.

First, every Soldier must know and understand our mission and its importance. I've already stated the mission twice in this note. It is important because if we fail, Iraq will not hold free and fair elections, seat a new government that is an example for the world and neutralize extremists who threaten not only Iraq, but America and the world. And if this does not happen, U.S. Soldiers will not complete the mission and leave Iraq.

Second, every Soldier in this Brigade Combat Team, Security Force Augmented must understand the importance of their individual job or duty to our mission. We have been successful in the first 100 days because everyone understands this. Do not lose sight of it now. When Command Sgt. Maj. Montour and I talked to newcomers every month before deploying, I always start by showing where everyone fits within the Brigade and how it takes all parts of the Brigade for the whole to work. Every Soldier is critical to our success; the Infantryman searching for caches or conducting cordon and search, the engineer on a route clearance patrol, the Soldier on a Combat Logistics Patrol, the medic, the armorer, the HAZMAT specialist. I could go on and on. The point is, everyone is a critical part of the team. Knowing that and acting that way is what got us this far. DO NOT FORGET IT.

Third, our Family's support, sacrifice and all the roles and duties they fill at home are equal or more important to those mentioned above. Our rear detachment and Family Readiness Groups are vital to our success as is every Soldier's individual family.

Fourth, we must adhere to our values. For the Commandos, foremost of these is the Commando 6; Fitness, the basics, standards, Commanders Command and NCOs run units, Teamwork, Do the Right Thing. As simple as these are, they are exactly the fundamentals that if adhered to will prevent complacency and fatigue.

As we go forward, know that our mission is critically important and every Soldier's duty is critical to the success of that mission. Our Families are also crucial to our success. Never get off track with the Commando 6.

I look forward to serving the next 100 days with you as we perform our duty with - COURAGE and HONOR

COL David Miller

**Notes from an Old Warrior**
**Commando Families and Friends,**

Happy New Year and greetings from South East Baghdad, Iraq I would like to start by saying how proud all of us here are of our Families back home.

We have had numerous additions to our family over the past 90 days. To each Mother back home both Col. Miller and I would like to congratulate you on your new addition to your family.

I have spoken with many of the new Fathers who are extremely excited about the birth of their child and the few that are here can't wait to get home to see the new addition to their family.

To all our Families at home, keep up the support not only to your spouse but to each other as well. You and your spouse are truly the core of this Brigade's strength. Watching our Soldiers do what they have trained so hard to do is an awesome sight. Watching our families do the same thing by coming together and helping each other in their time of need is one of the best things about this Army Family.

Our Soldiers are getting after it. Last month we were getting our feet wet and trying to get a feel for the operational environment we're operating in. Now that we understand the battle space the Soldiers across the Brigade have been making numerous strides.

We have the responsibility of helping train our Iraqi Army and Federal Police brothers. This young force wants nothing more than to look, act and be trained like your spouses are. Each unit is running a training academy for their Iraqi counterparts. Classes focus on leadership, marksmanship and other classes allowing the IA and FP to dictate what they feel they need to be successful. When all is said and done it will be the Iraqi's who pick up these training academies, and they will start training themselves, in anticipation of U.S. Soldiers responsible withdrawal.

Not only have the Soldiers been playing a major role in helping train, the IA and FP Soldiers across the formation have assisted in opening numerous green houses and drip irrigation systems in an effort to create rich farmland, essential water treatment facilities and solar water treatment pump stations, power distribution stations, sewage systems and helping identify and putting in place the training needed to maintain the equipment and many other projects that are helping posture our return home once we are told our mission is complete.

I share this with you only because you don't see a lot of what is happening here in the news anymore, and you may be wondering what your spouse is doing today. Know this, he or she is bringing stability to an area that has been hit very hard over the past several years. Now, because of the assistance in training the security forces and stability they've helped to provide, people come outside, kids are able to play in parks and markets have opened back up.

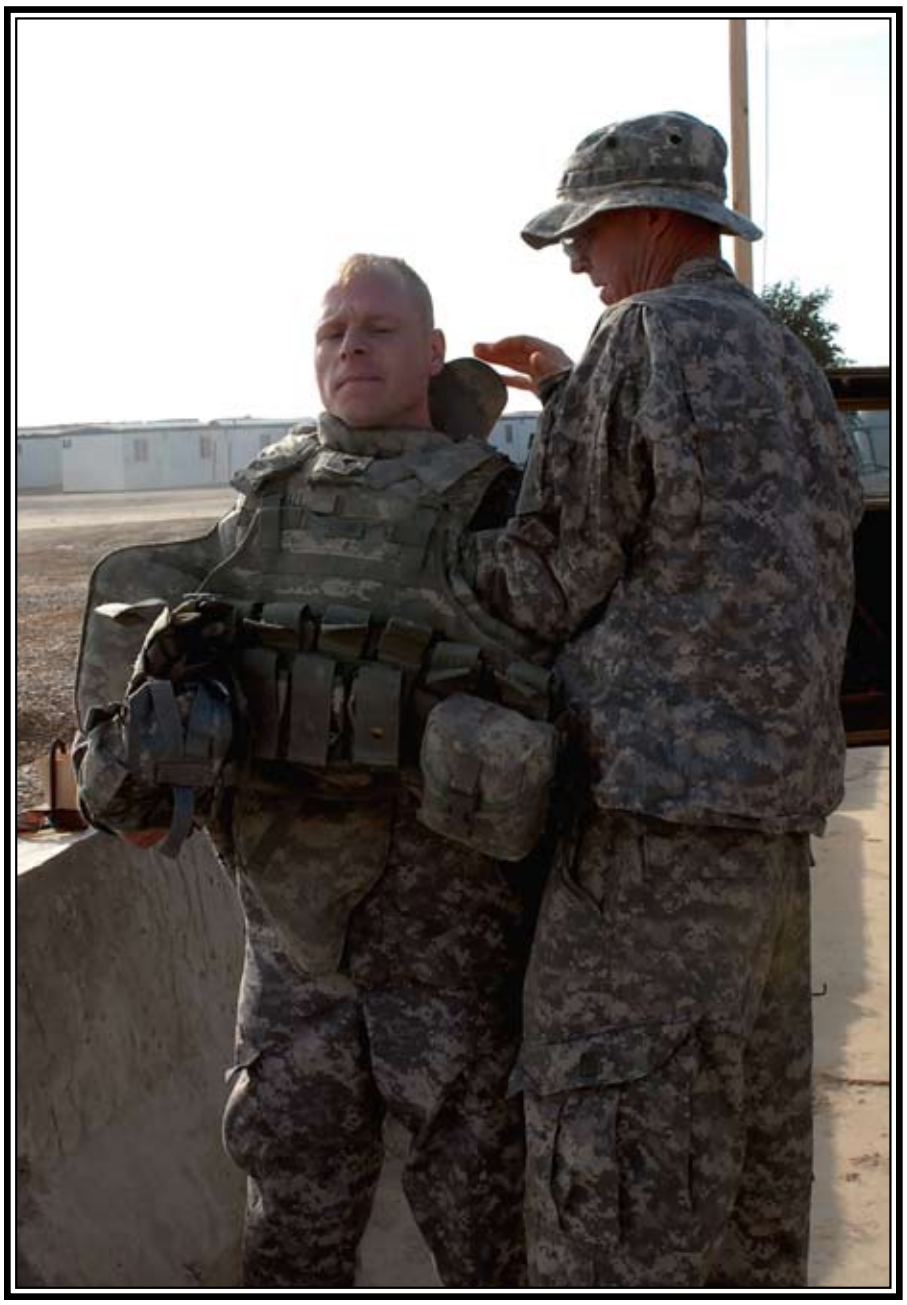
Although we are not conducting combat operations on a day to day basis and many things that take place are through our Iraqi brothers, we are committed to making sure our Soldiers remain safe, vigilant and aware of the surroundings they are in.

Lastly, our first Soldiers have begun their leave. We started sending Soldiers home on 16 December 2009. Until told different, we will continue to use the Enviromental Moral Leave program. Unfortunately, there are "no extensions" authorized for EML, and Soldiers are required to report back to their gateway as directed on their leave form. There are always circumstances that we cannot control and create a need for emergency leave. The criteria for emergency leave is the same as outlined in the army regulations. The brigade commander does have the flexibility to place a Soldier into a emergency leave status. This process begins with talking with the rear detachment prior to the Soldiers leave ending. Keep in mind since it will go from rear detachment to the forward unit it will take a few days and therefore you want to give not only yourself but the unit forward enough time to try and help. Unfortunately, the brigade rear commander does not have that flexibility and therefore cannot grant emergency leave for any Soldier on EML.

I ask that you keep the Soldiers and Families that have had families affected by the latest natural disaster in Haiti in your thoughts and prayers. As always, thank you for the support you provide, not only to our Soldiers, but thank you for the support you provide the unit, and MOST importantly each other during our deployment.

**Courage and Honor / Climb to Glory!**
CSM Joe Montour

**Operation Proper Exit ~Pg. 1**



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jennie Burrett

wards your recovery and this is just one more step to help come full circle with accepting your injury," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Schlitz, of Moline, Ill., a former 4th Bn., 31st Inf. Regt. Soldier. Schlitz was injured during his unit's last deployment when his vehicle hit an improvised explosive device resulting in him being a double arm amputee, being burnt over 85 percent of his body, and losing some of his vision.

"It is very important for me to show the guys that if they get hurt they can come back; there is still life after an injury. Two or three years ago I would have never thought I would have come back to this place and here I am now healthy I am doing a lot more than I ever thought I was going to do and now I can show it to them and give them a little bit of support."

During the day's events at COP Carver the wounded warriors took time to visit with the Soldiers, letting them ask questions and took a look at the new equipment the U.S. troops have now compared to when they were in a theater of operation.

"I think for [the wounded warriors] they get the reassurance that the things that they have done and the effort they have put into it isn't going to waste," said Cpl. Ryan Clark, of Phoenix, Az., an infantry team leader. "And it lets us know, even for some of the younger Soldiers, that you should never give up and always put forth the effort in whatever you do."

This is the third time Multi-National Division—Baghdad has conducted Operation Proper Exit for the wounded warriors to return to Iraq.

"Younger Soldiers are learning that bad things do happen sometimes, but it is possible to continue on and carry on with a productive life in the future," said 1st Sgt. Chris McMillian, of Hoyleton, Ill., Schlitz's former platoon sergeant. "Seeing Sgt. Schlitz again is always fun. He hasn't changed since his injuries. He always has a smile, always has a joke; makes me laugh. It is nice to see my friend again."

*Left: Sgt. William Congleton (left), of Sutherlin, Ore., tries on an Improved Outer Tactical Vest just to get the feel for it compared to the Improved Ballistic Armor he wore when he was last in Iraq during a visit with 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, at Contingency Operation Post Carver Dec. 30. Congleton deployed to Camp Taji, Iraq in 2004 when he suffered a below knee amputation of his right leg after a roadside improvised explosive device went off near his humvee.*

**2-15 Essential Services ~Pg. 1**

businesses within the Zafaranya industrial area and 200 cubic meters to the locals in the surrounding communities. The plan is to increase the availability to more businesses and local people in the future

"We [the water treatment facility contractor and U.S. forces] have been working together for the last few months to repair and refurbish the entire water treatment plant in order to produce water capacity for southwest Zafaranya," said Capt. Joseph Ortiz, of Sacketts Harbor, N. Y., the fire support officer for 2nd Battalion, 15 Field Artillery. "[This project is] allowing Iraqi leadership to deal with public works for new developments and future plans and to continue operations with one another."

The water treatment plant, when complete, is expected to have two major impacts; on the citizens of southwest Zafaranya, and on the industry complex in the surrounding area, which includes 16 major companies.

The project is 78-percent complete and is scheduled to be finished in the next 30 days.

*Left: Lt. Col. Michael Davey, of Peru, N.Y., the deputy commanding officer of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, and Mohammed Al-Rubeiy, the Chairman of Planning Commission strategy in the Baghdad Provincial Council, tour the National Chemical Plastic Industry water treatment facility Jan. 18 during an essential services conference. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jennie Burrett*

# Motivated Soldier inspires and excels above her peers

*By Sgt. Jennie Burrett*
*2nd BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div., MND-B*

BAGHDAD – Many Soldiers come into the U.S. Army right out of high school because they don't know what else to do when they don't want to go to college yet and this is the exact thing a young, motivated Soldier from 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division has done with her life.

Spc. Rhoebbie Palero, a 20-year old human resource specialist with 210th BSB, 2nd BCT, is the promotion clerk for the battalion and was selected by the chain-of-command of 2nd BCT to be a featured Commando of the month. Palero was nominated by the noncommissioned officer in charge of her.

"I nominated Spc. Palero because, although she is young in age, she is an excellent role model for her peers," said Sgt 1st Class Anika Hight, of Grand Rapids, Mich., the noncommissioned officer in charge of the human resource section in 210 BSB. "I think she is going to become a wonderful leader, whether she stays in the NCO corps or the officer corps. In my opinion, and I have a lot of people who will agree with me, she is a true professional in what we do in our craft, human resources. She is very strong physically and mentally."

Palero was promoted three months above her peers to specialist, and just three months after she was promoted she went to the Warriors Leader Course. WLC is a course all enlisted Soldiers must complete before they can be eligible for staff sergeant, two ranks above specialist and usually completed after promotion to sergeant. Palero graduated being the Iron Soldier, meaning she had the highest physical fitness score of all the people in the class. Days after she graduated WLC, Palero was sent to the promotion board for sergeant and walked away promotable, a year ahead of her peers.

"If there is a problem and you see it and you want to do something about it, you might as well be the solution," said Palero, a resident of Waipahu, Hawaii, showing her determination and drive in the military. "I want to be better. I want to get an education. That is why I am going to school now."

She has completed 28 credits since last year while on active duty. She researches a lot of knowledge on her own related to her job so she knows what is going on, to make sure when her fellow Soldiers come to her for answers she can help them. She likes to read all information on her own so that she knows it is right. Ways Palero has excelled above many of her peers is by maxing military education, weapons qualification, and the physical fitness test.

The Army's definition of leadership is influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization. Palero does this to help the Soldiers in her section as well as her friends if they need help with physical training or anything else.

"You should always just have fun," she said.

Today, Palero is deployed for her first deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

*Spc. Rhoebbie Palero, of Waipahu, Hawaii, a human resource specialist with 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, helps Capt. Elizabeth Parker, of Virginia Beach, Va., an officer in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 210 BSB, update her personal information files on Jan. 25, at Contingency Operating Station Hammer.*
*U.S. Army photo by Georges Aboumrad*

# Federal Police take lead in patrolling operations with 2-15

*By Spc. Rebecca Schwab*
*2nd BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div., MND-B*

BAGHDAD – Only a few years ago, it might have been hard to believe a quiet, peaceful patrol on the streets of Baghdad where U.S. Soldiers work together with Iraqi authorities could be possible.

Today, seeing is believing as Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, regularly carry out presence patrols in Baghdad mahalas, or residential neighborhoods, with Iraqi Federal Police planning and leading the missions.

Army leaders say the ultimate goal is to turn operations entirely over to their Iraqi counterparts.

"The main reason why we are here is to train the [Iraqi Federal Police], and the armed forces, and to turn it over to them so they will be able to take care of their people," said Sgt. Christian Aleman, from Miami, Fla., a team leader with Battery B, 2nd Bn., 15th FA.

The U.S. Soldiers are minimizing a potentially negative effect on Iraqi civilians by following the lead of the Iraqi Federal Police.

"It's pretty quiet," said Spc. Joseph Hambleton, from Long Grove, Iowa, a forward observer assigned to 3rd Platoon. "Some of the locals that we do see, we stop and communicate with them a little bit. They know we are there for them [and that] we aren't there to harm them."

One of the main purposes of their patrols is to help build the confidence of Iraqi citizens in their own army and police forces.

"It allows the people to see us working hand-in-hand, to see the [Iraqi] soldiers on the ground leading us," said 2nd Lt. Gordon Rutledge, from Madison, Wis., platoon leader for 3rd platoon, Battery B, 2-15.

Warrant Officer Imad Jabbar Diham, with the 1-1 Iraqi Federal Police Brigade, works with 2-15 at their Joint Tactical Operations Center and said the patrols have been part of an important learning process for the Iraqi Federal Police.

"We are doing partnership patrols with the coalition forces and they are helping [us]," he said. "If we make a mistake on the patrol, the coalition forces will tell us about that mistake, [so it won't] be done again in the future."

As U.S. forces continue to transfer responsibility of patrols and other operations over to the Iraqi Security Forces, they simultaneously are preparing for U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. Rutledge said the improvements the Iraqi Federal Police officers have made in just the last two months alone give him confidence in the U.S. withdrawal timeline.

"We really are making progress with the federal policemen here. Their lower level leadership that I work with on a [regular] basis have definitely improved [and moved] toward intelligence-driven operations instead of waiting for something to happen and reacting," he said. "In the two short months I've been here, that's a great leap."

*U.S. Army photo by Spc. Rebecca Schwab*
*Staff Sgt. Kevin Marshall, of Thomason, Ga., a cannon crew member with 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, pulls security during a joint patrolling mission in a Baghdad neighborhood Jan. 5. Soldiers in 2-15 FA, regularly carry out presence patrols in their operational environment, with a growing reliance on Iraqi Federal Police to escort them and plan the missions.*

*Pfc. Jeremy Ogrizovich, a resident of Chicago, Ill., an infantryman deployed with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, wins the 5K Jingle Bell Jog competition on Christmas day at Contingency Operating Site Hammer.*

# Commando

*Col. David Miller, a resident of Evanston, Ill., commander of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, talks to one of the brigade command security team squads at Joint Security Station Loyalty while conducting a Christmas day battle field circulation in the brigade Operation environment in eastern Baghdad.*

*Soldiers from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, gathered at Contingency Operating Site Hammer, east of Baghdad, on Dec. 25 to celebrate Christmas day with a 5K Jingle Bell Jog followed by sports competitions throughout the day.*

# Christmas

*Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Montour, a resident of Amarillo, TX, the command sergeant major of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, dressed in an Army Combat Uniform Santa Claus suit, hands out candy to Lt. Col. Heyward Hutson, of Charleston, S.C., the battalion commander of 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment, Christmas day as he pulls security at Joint Security Station Zafaraniya giving the 2-15 Soldiers Christmas day off.*

# One of the U.S. Army's most decorated Soldiers, Col. Robert Howard

*By Spc. Rebecca Schwab*
*2nd BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div., MND-B*

The U.S. Army lost one of its best this past December.

Col. Robert Howard, a Medal of Honor recipient wounded fourteen times in a two and a half year period during his combat tours to Vietnam, died of pancreatic cancer on Dec 23, 2009, at the age of 70. Howard was one of the U.S. Army's most decorated soldiers, also receiving the Distinguished Service Cross, The Silver Star, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, and eight Purple Hearts - among other awards - for his service and bravery in combat.

Since its inception during the Civil War, the Medal of Honor has been given to a total to 3,446 sevicemembers of all branches who demonstrated "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty." Sixty percent of the Medals of Honor given since World War II have been awarded posthumously.

Born on July 11, 1939, in Opelika, Alabama, Howard enlisted in the Army in 1956 at the age of 17, joining the 101st Airborne Division.

"I was like many young men my age who enlisted," Howard said in an interview with the Stars and Stripes in 2009. "I wanted to protect the ideals of this country and also build a career. Little did I know that my experiences would lead to a Medal of Honor, and how poignant those lessons would be even now — 53 years later — during our current national hardship."

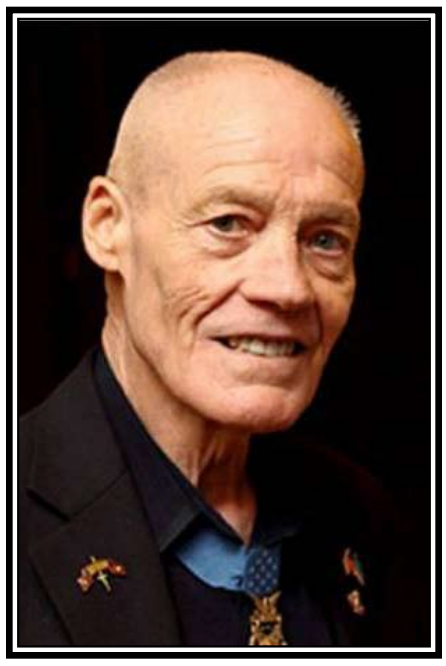
In December 1968, Howard was a 29-year-old sergeant first class serving with the U.S. Army Special Forces in Vietnam. He and his team ran classified cross-border operations into Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam - some of the most dangerous work done by the military during the Vietnam War. Howard's platoon of American-Vietnamese troops began a mission to recover a missing American soldier in enemy territory when it was ambushed by a force estimated to be about 250 troops.

During the initial fighting, Howard and his platoon leader were wounded by an exploding mine. Unable to walk and with his weapon destroyed, Howard crawled through a barrage of fire to reach his wounded lieutenant and attempted to pull him to safety. Before they could reach cover, a bullet struck an ammunition pouch in the lieutenant's belt, detonating several magazines. Despite his injuries, Howard pulled his platoon leader to cover with the rest of his platoon and began to administer first aid.

"For the next three and half hours, I had one choice: to lay and wait, or keep fighting for my men," Howard said. "If I waited, I gambled that things would get better while I did nothing. If I kept fighting, no matter how painful, I could stack the odds that recovery for my men and a safe exodus was achievable."

Howard rallied his disoriented platoon together again into an organized fighting force by crawling to different positions, assisting with first aid, and offering words of encouragement and direction to his soldiers. Howard's small platoon and supporting aircraft managed to ward off enemy attacks until rescue helicopters were finally able to land. Howard, wanting to ensure the safety of his soldiers, was the last to board. For his actions, he gained an officer's commission and received the Medal of Honor from President Nixon in 1971.

"Extraordinary things can be accomplished by ordinary people from all parts of America," Howard said, when speaking about his experiences. "Hard times ask us to put a greater good before our own interests. It is sometimes physically or emotionally painful. Yet throughout history, you will find common men and women who fought selflessly in a variety of ways for something so much larger than just their own benefit."



Although the Medal of Honor can only be given to a recipient one time, Howard was nominated for the Medal of Honor three times for three separate acts of heroism in combat - all of which happened in a 13-month period, from 1967-68.

To Howard, his actions simply fell in line with the responsibilities of a leader.

"We had no choice but to stay motivated as leaders," he said. "As for our Soldiers, we reminded them that God and country came before our needs."

Howard retired from the army as a colonel in 1992 after 36 years of military service, but his work did not stop there. Since Sept. 11, 2001, he demonstrated his support for U.S. troops by traveling numerous times to both Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Today, we're fighting terrorism and the spread of tyranny," Howard said. "We're challenged by market upheaval, joblessness and perhaps hunger. But the human spirit is resilient and can withstand more than sometimes we are able to immediately comprehend."

He charged U.S. soldiers today with the responsibility to take action now, to not wait for a better day but instead to "look for opportunities to make the lives of those around us better."

"I have a great appreciation for Americans serving this great country. It's our privilege to be here with you," Howard said during an April 2009 visit to service members in Iraq. "You are very privileged to have the greatest leaders that we've had in our services, especially in the United States Army in the past 235 years, because of your level of professionalism. But it's more than professionalism. It's dedication and love of your country or you wouldn't be here. I applaud you."

*Capt. Robert Howard is awarded the Medal of Honor by President Richard Nixon at the White House March 2, 1971 for his conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty in battle during the Vietnam War in December 1968.*

# "TEARS OF THE ROSE"

*By Chaplain (Maj.) Alan T. Savage*
*2nd BCT Chaplain, 10th Mtn. Div., MND-B*

*The nurse escorted me down a long hallway that opened into a dark lab room. Through the shadows I saw an old women sitting next to a gurney; the nurse nodded in her direction and then closed the door behind her as she left. With hesitation leaking out of my voice, I introduced myself as the duty chaplain for the Army post and offered my condolences. After what seemed like hours, she looked up with tear-stained eyes and softly replied, "Thank you for coming." Feeling a bit awkward and searching my mind for something appropriate to say, I wisely resigned myself to silence and pulled up a chair and sat quietly by her side.*

*She lovingly stroked his forehead and then leaned forward and kissed his now blue lips. "It's going to be alright my love—you rest now", she whispered. Rose and her husband had been married for nearly 45 years and had settled in the area after his retirement from the Army. Hot tears fell from her chin onto to the cold skin of her husband's face as she continued to gently run her fingers through his hair. Realizing that I was witnessing a very sacred experience, I excused myself and pulled my chair to the back wall several feet away. For the next twenty minutes or so I sat silently and watched Rose speak softly to her husband, telling him how much so loved and missed him. All the while she gently stroked his head, kissed his face and quietly wept over his body. Tears rolled down my face as I took in this deeply provocative example of relational intimacy.*

*By watching her suffer through the issue of death, she taught me a great lesson on the value of life. It reminded me of the sage advice of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow when he wrote: "Take this sorrow to thy heart and make it a part of thee, and it will nourish thee until thou art strong again" (Hyperion, 1839). The thorns of life not only failed to forbid her to grow but actually facilitated her to bloom. I'll never forget the tears of the Rose.*

# Photos From Home!

# Commandos pass training torch to partner at Cashe South

*By Staff Sgt. Jeff Hansen*
*366th MPAD, USD-C*

BAGHDAD – Soldiers at Contingency Operation Station Cashe South have moved a step ahead of most with their training and transition programs.

Task Force Nassir, a four-phase training course designed to enhance the combat and leadership skills of Iraqi Federal Police, has now converted to being taught completely by Iraqi instructors.

According to 1st Lt. Ilyas Renwick, a platoon leader with 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, transitioning to "Iraqis teaching Iraqis" was always meant to be the end state of TF Nassir, which was originally taught by U.S. Soldiers. He said he is impressed at how smooth the process has been for them.

"The instructors have been great," Renwick said. "We're always here to provide the extra resources and helping hands, but they're doing a great job teaching their [policemen]."

*(U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jeff Hansen, 366th MPAD, USD-C)*
*During a class on machine gun maintenance, Staff Sgt. Gable, a platoon sergeant with Task Force Nassir, assists an instructor with buddy-assisted disassembly techniques. The machine gun class was added to the training program after leaders noticed the ISF had limited training and experience on large weapon systems.*

The concept of training for TF Nassir starts with basic assessments and training in a classroom environment, with the later stages moving into real-world scenarios. Basic rifle marksmanship, machine gun familiarization, individual patrol movements and evidence handling techniques are all parts of the second phase of training and are taught by members of 3rd Brigade, 1st Iraqi Federal Police. U.S. Soldiers are present for all classes to provide oversight and assistance.

Renwick, a native of Fayetteville, N.C., said he has been impressed with the enthusiasm and cooperation of the shurta, Iraqi Federal Policemen, during the program, which has went through several changes over the past year due to changes in the FP operational environment. Some tasks have been added or modified at the request of the instructors, who brought real-world experience to the course.

For example, traffic control points are a permanent structure in Baghdad, whereas U.S. Soldiers are used to controlling a temporary TCP. The class needed to be altered to fit the local situation.

"We're doing our best to train the shurta. They're being trained on things they really need," said 1st Lt. Haydar Abd Almajeed, the officer in charge of TF Nassir. Haydar is assigned to 3rd Brigade, 1st Iraqi Federal Police.

Haydar said he is excited to see the shurta implementing the skills they were taught in basic training and looks forward to seeing them using the new skills learned during TF Nassir.

Leadership on both sides realized the FP had very limited training and experience on large weapon systems and decided a preventive maintenance instruction class should be added to the program. With U.S. assistance, a PMI class was implemented and is taught by Iraqi subject-matter experts.

A similar situation was responsible for the intermediate casualty care training. Due to logistical constraints, training aids had been in very short supply for a 60-man class. Most policemen had received no first aid training prior to TF Nassir.

Spc. Ryan Jorgensen, a medic assigned to TF Nassir, has been assisting Iraqi medics with this part of the course. Jorgensen said he understands medical training can be a lot to absorb, so he has been limiting his class to one or two tasks each day.

The medical instructor for TF Nassir, Sgt. Adel Sadweg, said the FP were amazed at first at how much training would be available for this course. He stated that too many ISF casualties occur simply from the lack of tactical field care knowledge.

"We have absorbed a lot of experience from the Americans, and I like them helping us with more advanced [medical] techniques," said Sadweg, who has been a medic with the Ministry of the Interior for more than six years.

Renwick said he and his fellow TF Nassir members are excited to be working with the FP students and instructors in the future. They hope to stay on the path they have laid so far and continue to build camaraderie and friendship with their Iraqi counterparts and they strive together to build a safer Iraq.

*(U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jeff Hansen, 366th MPAD, USD-C)*
*Sgt. Areef Ilyas, a Task Force Nassir instructor assigned to 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Iraqi Federal Police, instructs a student on individual movement techniques during a patrolling class Jan. 11. For the first time since its inception more than a year ago, TF Nassir is being taught by Iraqis, with U.S. Soldiers only providing oversight and assistance.*

# 2-14 Inf. Medics conduct Medical training with 4-1 FP

*By Capt. Frank Remillard*
*2-14th Inf. Reg., 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Divi., USD-C*

BAGHDAD – Medics from the 2nd Battalion, 14 Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division Forward Aid Station conducted a three day trauma management program with the 4th Brigade, 1st Federal Police Division January 6 to 8 at Joint Security Station Beladiyat.

This training provided a series of classroom instruction combined with numerous practical exercises to increase the level of effectiveness of the 4-1 medics.

"The training was intended to focus on equipment currently possessed by the FP, and how to utilize such equipment during combat operations" said 1st Lt. Joshua Perry, 2-14 Medical Platoon Leader. "We focused on building relationships as well as to train the trainers in order to extend the knowledge base of general Soldiers. It was good to see the enthusiasm and effort put forth by 4-1 FP and it shows their ability to learn in an environment that can also be fun."

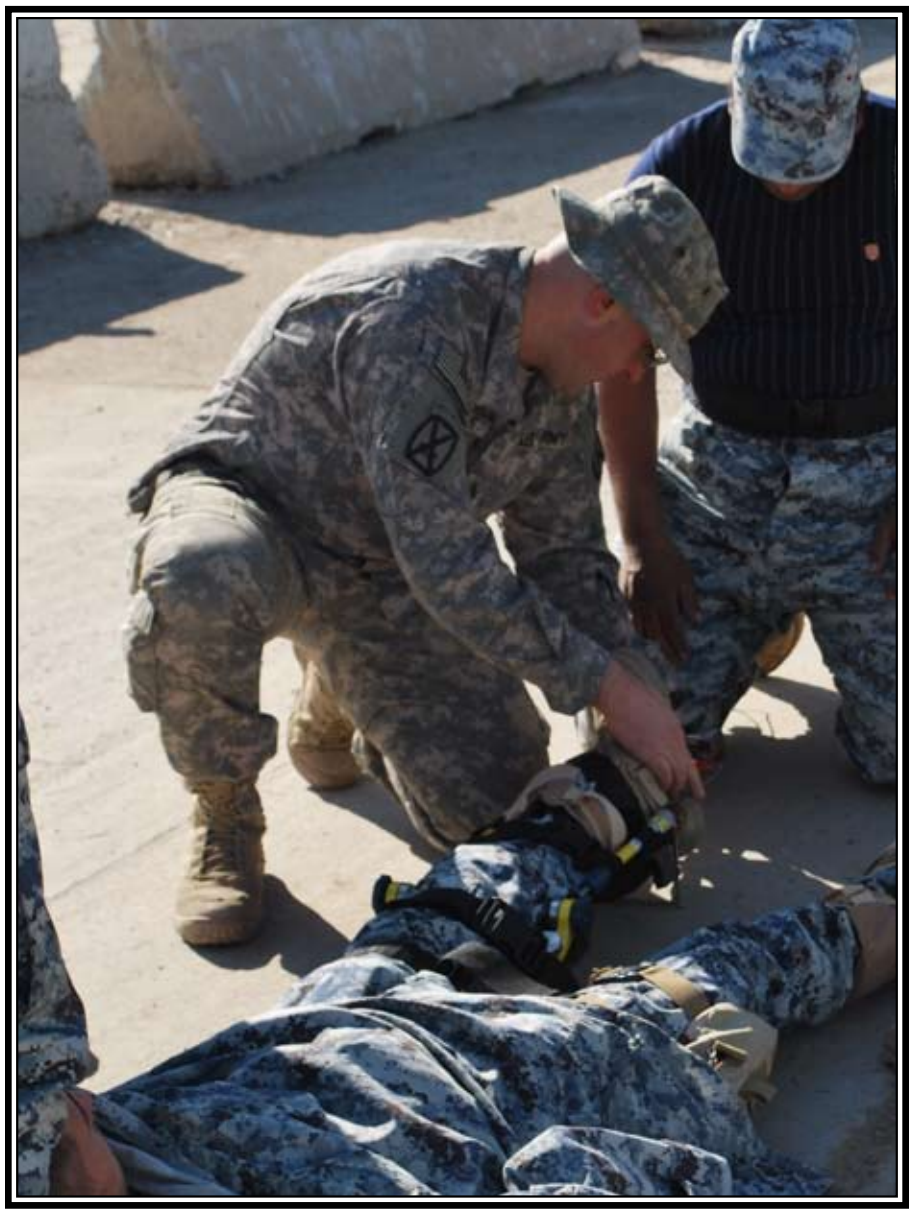
Sixteen personnel attended the training comprised of medics, cooks and junior leadership. The 2-14 Physician Assistant, Capt. Andrew McPhie, led all classroom instruction and demonstrations prior to execution of practical exercises.

Once the formal instruction was complete Sgt. First Class Ian Francis, Staff Sgt. Mark Doonan, and Spc. Thomas Martinez led the physically demanding exercises and squad competition. The competitions were evaluated by time and accuracy of treatment based on a standard set of injuries on each casualty.

"At the end of the training, it was interesting to see them be able to put it all together without us giving additional advice and instruction," said McPhie. "They learned what we taught them quickly and were able to give their own input based on situations they have encountered during FP Patrols."

Lt. Col. John Petkosek, 2-14 commander, and Lt. Col. Herbert Charity, 4-1 FP Transition Team Chief, attended the concluding ceremony where FP Soldiers were presented Certificates of Training.

The Soldiers do not have a lot of time to conduct additional training due to mission requirements and expressed their appreciation to the medical platoon, requesting follow on training for more Soldiers.



*U.S. Army photo by By Capt. Frank Remillard, 2-14th Inf. Reg., 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Divi., USD-C*

*Sgt. First Class Ian Francis, Medical Platoon Sergeant for 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, demonstrates to Soldiers from 4th Brigade, 1st Federal Police Division, how to stabilize a leg injury. Medical Trauma Training culminated at Joint Security Station Beladiyat on Jan. 8 with a series of stress and assessment lanes.*

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*We reserve the right to edit for security, accuracy, propriety, clarity and space.*

*Commando Update is in compliance with AR 360-1.*

*U.S. Army photo by By Sgt. Jose Ortiz, 2-14th Inf. Reg., 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Divi., USD-C*

*Sgt. Lucas Newell of Phoenix, Az., an Indirect Fire Infantryman with 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Battalion, was reunited for a week with his uncle Sgt. First Class Kevin Newell, a senior noncommissioned officer in the 49th Transportation Battalion out of Ft. Hood, TX, at Joint Security Station SUJ in Eastern Baghdad, Iraq Jan. ????.*