

# The Sandstorm

The magazine of the 2nd BCT, 10th Mountain Division - Vol. 1, Issue 8



**The Shadow knows:  
Soldiers give  
commanders  
eye in the sky**

**Iraqi NCOs  
graduate  
from Warrior  
Leaders' course**

**Also: Polar Bears, Providers save baby's life**

# The Sandstorm

The official magazine of  
the Second Brigade  
Combat Team

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### Cover photo:

A Soldier of the 2nd Battalion, 15th  
Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Bri-  
gade Combat Team, 10th Mountain  
Division (LI) scuffs dirt from a pos-  
sible cache in a palm grove in the  
Abdullah-Sayyid corridor in Iraq.

(Photo by Pfc. Jon Cano, 2nd BCT PAO)



# In this issue:



Soldiers of the 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) patrol an overpass on Route Tampa, a main highway near Baghdad, on one of their routine trips through the area to keep military and civilian traffic alike safe from terror.

*See Cruising the Drag, page 4*



A Soldier of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) tends to a desperately ill child in his father's arms at Patrol Base Yusufiyah. Soldiers of the 'Polar Bear' battalion joined forces with medics of the 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd BCT, to provide medical care for local children.

*See Polar Bears and Providers, page 5*

## Commander's Comments

*"The nation which forgets its defenders will be itself forgotten."*  
- Calvin Coolidge, (1872-1933)



Kershaw

Commandos,  
I just finished my EML and wanted to share my impressions with you. After visiting with our wounded at Walter Reed, I returned to Fort Drum where I had the opportunity to speak with the FRG steering committee as well as the rear detachment commanders. I also had the opportunity to speak with the Corpus Christi Downtown Rotary Club while visiting my family in Texas. I briefed all of these groups on our activities in sector.

Your wounded comrades were most interested in what had happened since they left theatre and how their buddies, squads and platoons were doing. I took the opportunity to present many of them with awards they had earned fighting with us.

The steering committee, as might be expected, was most interested in when the BCT would return from Iraq. At the time, there were many rumors going around but there had been nothing definitive to date. I explained to them the process by which the Army extends units in country. As I have discussed with

your chains of command, forces currently in country have been requested to be extended to 15 month tours and that each individual unit extension can only be approved personally by the Secretary of Defense.

After digging my family out of six feet of snow, we proceeded to Texas. While in Corpus Christi, I took the opportunity to speak to the Downtown Rotary. My presentation focused on the activities of the

Commandos and our Iraqi counterparts and what I see as our role in this fight.

From this engagement, I can tell you that the country is very interested in what is going on in Iraq right now. Many are frustrated with what they hear and want to know what it is really like. The questions were all very relevant. I was asked what I thought about our rules of engagement, what role the Iraqi Army plays and of my opinion of 'the surge' and current strategy. Many veterans asked what I think the differences in this conflict are from previous ones.

Regardless of the questions asked, all expressed their support for you. Many who asked me questions tracked me down afterward to echo this; others included it as part of their question. To a man, the Vietnam veterans told me that there is still strong sen-

timent throughout our country for the troops, in spite of the current political debate and how different it was from their experience. Many people asked me what they could do to support the Soldiers. Others offered their prayers.

For those of you who still have to complete your mid-tour leave, you should be prepared to encounter questions of a similar nature while at home. The choice to speak should be based on your own personal preference but my impression is that the public supports our Soldiers and has many questions. As a military leader, I believe it is my responsibility to offer my impressions within the limits of my duties, role and perspective here. Whether you do so or not is a personal choice; however you should be prepared to be engaged by those at home on what your role is here in Iraq. A large part of this war is a fight for information and the public needs to know what is really going on.

In the meantime, the tough business goes on. The things that are happening at the company and platoon level are astounding. Each of you should be proud. The people at home don't always get a good picture of that part of this mission but I can tell you for a fact that the country supports us in our daily duties.

COMMANDOS!



Photo by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT PAO

## Making things official

*Sa'if Faisal (left), a member of the Yusufiyah Iraqi police, signs a receipt for an armor vest, boots and other equipment recently acquired by the department. Thirteen Iraqi police received new gear Feb. 20 at the new Joint Security Station in Yusufiyah, Iraq, with Gen. Abid Muhammad, chief of Iraqi police for the district, personally distributing the equipment. Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) were on hand to help the police with fitting their gear.*

# Cav troops 'cruise the drag' to protect Soldiers, Iraqis

Spc. Chris McCann  
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) PAO

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq — American Graffiti. Easy Rider. Grease.

Since the dawn of the automobile age, American teenagers have "cruised" up and down the streets and roads, talking with friends, and sometimes stopping to fight. It's no different in Iraq, really.

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) regularly "cruise" the roads and byways south of Baghdad, on watch for terrorist acts and improvised explosive devices.

The main highway through Iraq, known to coalition forces as Route Tampa, is a prime target for IEDs and other acts of terror because it is so heavily traveled by military and civilian convoys as well as local civilian traffic.

It is therefore patrolled almost constantly, day and night, to deny terrorists the ability to harm the thousands of vehicles that travel it.

"We're allowing freedom of movement," said Sgt. Gilbert Sanchez, a dismount with Troop C, 1-89, and a native of Bakersfield, Calif., during a patrol Feb. 16. "We're allowing people to travel with more confidence,

both civilians and military. And it makes me feel good knowing we're helping the Iraqis."

On a nighttime mission Feb. 14, Spc. Andrew Snyder of Temple, Penn., who serves as a driver in Co. A, admitted that the job is often dull, but it's critical.

"It allows the units in the brigade to do their missions," he said. "We're doing this, so they can do that. And the fact that we do it allows everyone else — other units, or contractor convoys — to go back and forth. By keeping the

routes safe, we're helping everything else go smoother."

The Soldiers patrol in shifts, traveling up and down Tampa, sometimes stopping to watch the traffic from an observation point. Occasionally they will break it up into shorter shifts.

"It's hard to stay alert for eight hours," said Sanchez. "Breaking it up prevents complacency."

A patrol from the squadron found a man near Tampa Feb. 14 with a 50-pound sack of ammonium nitrate — a common ingredi-

ent in the homemade explosive mixtures that pack many of Iraq's IEDs.

The unit also patrols through the village of Mustafar, just off Route Tampa, where they are known by name, especially to the children.

The Soldiers check the village routinely, providing a sense of security not only on the road but to the villagers at home.

"Everything we do is for the kids," said Sanchez. "They're the future of Iraq."



Photos by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT PAO

Above: Spc. John LaCroix, a medic with Troop C, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) talks to children in Mustafar, Iraq, during a security patrol Feb. 16.

Left: Spc. Andrew Hung, a gunner with Troop A, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), watches Route Tampa south of Camp Striker, Iraq, during a route security mission Feb. 16.



# Polar Bears, Providers unite to save Iraqi baby's life

Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie  
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) PAO

YUSUFIYAH, Iraq — Soldiers recently received something they least expected — a baby.

Soldiers from the 210th Brigade Support Battalion “Providers” and the 4th Battalion 31st Infantry Regiment “Polar Bears,” both units of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), took care of a sick Iraqi baby at the Patrol Base Yusufiyah aid station in Yusufiyah, Iraq.

“The baby’s mother brought him to us because he was so sick,” said Maj. Casey Geaney, who serves as 4-31’s battalion surgeon.

Knowing that the baby, Sajad, was very ill and that the Iraqi medical system did not have the capabilities to care for him, Geaney decided Sajad would become an inpatient.

“Usually this is not an inpatient facility,” Geaney explained. “However, after discovering the child had an infection we did not want him to go home.”

Sajad, who was seven months of age, was only the size of a two-month-old. He was believed to have suffered brain injury during his birth.

“Sajad was very dehydrated and sick when we first saw him,” said Spc. Carrielynn Spillis, a 210th BSB medic, as she held him in her arms. “We have been feeding him through a tube because he was too weak to feed from a bottle.”

Keeping Sajad was a huge responsibility for the team. He required around-the-clock attention, just as any infant.

“We would take turns watching him,” Spillis explained. “One medic would stay with him at the aid station at night and others would watch him during the day.”

Another medic shared her thoughts of

caring for Sajad.

“It’s tiring to take care of him,” said Spc. Erin Byers, a medic with the 210th. “But it is a nice change of pace. I am used to dealing with Soldiers, but Sajad allowed me to be compassionate — it is a different mindset.”

After caring for Sajad for four days, Geaney decided he was well enough to return home. But before releasing the infant, Geaney and the medics taught Sajad’s father how to care for him.

“They (the doctor and medics) did a nice job,” said Nasseir Alaobed, Sajad’s father, as he was learning to feed his son through a tube. “The Iraqi hospitals do not have this kind of care and I am glad I brought him in.”

Sajad was returned to his parents fully hydrated and with more strength. At one point Spillis mentioned, Sajad was actually feeding from a bottle.

Although Sajad was helped, the need for Iraqi children to see doctors in Iraq is immense.

“There are a lot of children with chronic problems and it is frustrating that we see so many patients that need help,” Geaney said. “But we do what we can do to help.”

“Sajad has a better chance of survival,”

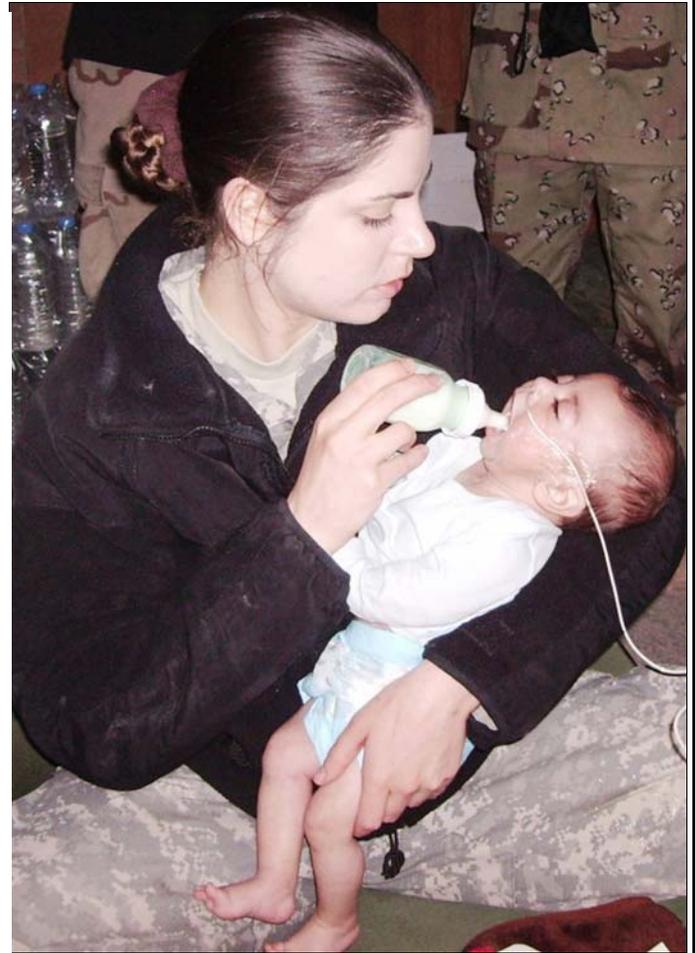


Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie, 2nd BCT PAO

Spc. Carrielynn Spillis, a medic with the 210th Brigade Support Battalion “Providers,” 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), takes care of Sajad, an ill Iraqi infant, at the Patrol Base Yusufiyah aid station in Yusufiyah, Iraq Feb. 21.

Geaney added with a smile.

Sajad’s parents were sent home with lessons on how to care for him and infant formula that contained extra calories in order to help Sajad gain weight.

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

### Division Scholarship

Former 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) commander Col. (Ret) Michael Plummer is funding a 10th Mountain Division scholarship for Soldiers and family members of the division.

The Northern New York Community Foundation, Inc. will award five \$5,000 scholarships in

April.

The applicant must be a current or former 10th Mountain Division member or the family member of one (spouse or child).

The applicant must also be a full-time undergraduate student.

Students who will be attending technical schools are eligible to apply.

New applications are accepted from high school seniors for the freshman year and from traditional and non-traditional students for any year in college or technical school. High school juniors in an early graduation program may

also apply.

Any unusual hardships and special family or personal circumstances should be described in the application.

Scholarship awards can be up to \$5,000 for one year.

For more information on the application, e-mail Public Affairs at [commando\\_brigade@yahoo.com](mailto:commando_brigade@yahoo.com) or call the 2nd BCT Public Affairs Office at (VOIP) 242-4372. To pick up an application, interested persons can come by the Public Affairs Office at the 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) Tactical Operations Center.

### Hometown media interviews

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division Public Affairs Office is seeking Soldiers to be interviewed by hometown radio and television stations in the United States.

Don’t miss this opportunity to tell your story. Interviews will not violate security and are voluntary.

For information or to schedule an interview time, please contact the 2nd BCT Public Affairs Office at (VOIP)242-4372 or e-mail [commando\\_brigade@yahoo.com](mailto:commando_brigade@yahoo.com)

# In Memoriam: D



**Spc. Bobby Callahan,**  
HHC, 4-31 Inf.,  
Sept. 19



**Pfc. Satieon Greenlee,**  
Co. A, 4-31 Inf.,  
Oct. 3



**Pfc. Thomas Hewett,**  
B Troop, 1-89 Cav.,  
Oct. 13



**2nd Lt. Johnny Craver,**  
1-22 Inf/4-31 Inf.,  
Oct. 13



**Spc. Nicholas Rogers,**  
HHC, 4-31 Inf.,  
Oct. 22



**Sgt. Curtis Norris,**  
F. Co, 4-31 Inf.,  
Dec. 23



**Sgt. Jason Denfrund,**  
B Co., 2-14 Inf.,  
Dec. 25



**Pfc. Nathaniel Given,**  
D Co., 4-31 Inf.,  
Dec. 27



**Sgt. Christopher Messer,**  
D Co., 4-31 Inf.,  
Dec. 27



**Sgt. Thomas Vandling,**  
303 TPC/ 1-89 Cav.,  
Jan. 1



**Spc. Raymond Mitchell,**  
C Co., 2-14 Inf.,  
Jan. 6



**Staff Sgt. Terrence Dunn,**  
B Co., 210 BSB,  
Feb. 2

# Our Fallen Comrades



**Capt. Kevin Landeck,**  
B Battery, 2-15 FAR,  
Feb. 2



**Spc. Brian Browning,**  
B Co., 4-31 Inf.,  
Feb. 6



**Spc. Matthew Bowe,**  
B Troop, 1-89 Cav.,  
Feb. 19



**Sgt. Shawn Dunkin,**  
B Troop, 1-89 Cav.,  
Feb. 19



**Pfc. Adare Cleveland,**  
B Troop, 1-89 Cav.,  
Feb. 19

No words spoken can ease the pain  
when Soldiers' bodies down are lain.  
We feel the loss in our very soul;  
without one man we are not whole.  
So bow your heads as you walk by;  
their boots no longer will they tie.  
If you're scared and things get hard,  
remember Commandos above stand guard.



**Sgt. John Cadavero,**  
HHC, 2nd BSTB,  
Feb. 27

-Staff Sgt. Timothy Chayman, Co. B., 4-31 Inf. Regt.



**Sgt. Richard Soukenka,**  
A Co., 2 BSTB,  
Feb. 27



**Cpl. Lorne Henry, Jr.**  
A Co., 2 BSTB,  
Feb. 27



**Spc. Thomas Latham,**  
C Co., 2-14 Inf.,  
March 11

# Dragons take back Az-Zaidon area

*Spc. Chris McCann  
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI)*

AZ-ZAIDON, Iraq — It was a scene that could almost have been taken from the movie “We Were Soldiers.” Troops stood in the darkness, waiting to get into helicopters to air-assault into an area of Iraq that had not seen U.S. forces in over a year, and someone mumbled something very like Lt. Col. Hal Moore’s comment in the film — “round-trip with choppers, thirty minutes — that means the first sixty men will be on the ground a half-hour alone.”

Fortunately for the Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion “Golden Dragons,” 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), the similarities to the story stopped there.

The Golden Dragons, joined by soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division surrounded the village of Ibrahim Sallal, southwest of Az-Zaidon, Iraq, in the predawn darkness of Feb. 3.

The first drop of Soldiers from Company B waited silently for the other half of the company to arrive before going to the homes in the area, waking the occupants and collecting all the military-age males in the village for questioning. They also gathered all the weapons they found in the houses.

The men were taken to the school in the center of the village, where they waited to be questioned as the Soldiers set up a defensive perimeter, communications equipment, and mortar tubes. Other Soldiers re-searched the village, being more thorough after the initial hunt where time was of the essence, turning up another man who had been sleeping, and a few more weapons.

The Iraqi soldiers searched the local mosque, where they found a few jihadist fliers.

Questioning began early and continued throughout the day. While the families had seemed a little frightened by the early intrusion, the wives and children soon came to the school, bringing socks and scarves for the men who did not have time to get them. They also brought food for the men of the village and the Soldiers alike. Some of the women brought ill children to be treated by the medics, and were given medicine.

“Everything has been very successful so far,” said Maj. Joel Smith, the 2-14 executive officer. “We did a rapid clearance of the houses on the objective, controlled all the military-aged males, and took contraband weapons. The mission is to get a better picture of the area; since our transfer of author-

ity, we’ve had no presence here.”

Several of the men told the interrogators that there was terrorist activity in the area, and said that one local man had been forced to leave days before after terrorists had threatened him and his family.

Despite the early hours that awakened the villagers, the Soldiers of Co. B were unfazed and even excited about the mission.

“We’re always out at four a.m.,” said Pfc. Charles Marcille, a rifleman with the company, as he stood outside the mosque guarding two men that had been found there. “This was my second air assault. I’m not a big flier — it’s nerve-wracking when you’re in a helicopter. But it’s exciting, too.”

1st Lt. George Webb, a platoon leader, was also enthused about the early-morning assignment.

“I couldn’t see myself, nor would I want to be, anywhere other than here, doing what we’re doing,” he said. “It’s neat seeing the reaction, especially from the children, and seeing the improvements we could make in the neighborhoods by bringing the sheikhs to a council.”

The mission included four Iraqi soldiers that work often with the company.

“We hope to catch insurgents on this mission,” said Koteba Hamid Ahmad. “We came in here to see the area, and everyone did a great job. The kids seem happy, the helicopter ride in went well, and working with the Americans is always good. We enjoy it every time.”

Bassim Muhammad Ali, who has done seven air assaults with the unit, agreed.

“I love working with the American Army. We four are always out with 2-14; this sort of mission isn’t new.”

Civil affairs Soldiers came in by convoy later that morning, distributing school supplies such as backpacks and colored pencils to dozens of eager children.

And although the 2nd BCT has not had much presence in the area until Saturday, the hope is that the time spent there will increase and bear fruit.

“I think we’re doing something productive and helping here,” said Pfc. Stephen Harris, a rifleman with Co. B. “We did a patrol to find caches and searched buildings. It

will definitely help; we’re taking a proactive approach. Ever since we’ve been proactive in an area, (improvised explosive device) attacks have gone down, because we’re keeping the insurgents on the run.”

While the men were detained for questioning until after dark, all were released to their homes when the company left that night.

“The decisive part of this mission was intelligence gathering,” said Capt. Palmer Phillips. “All our reports were six months to a year old. We found three people that we’d had reports on, and we developed them to our satisfaction, but we didn’t detain them. We have a start on developing information on Zaidon, and established ties between the Zaidon area and (the village of) Sadr Al-Yusufiyah which will be important in developing future operations. This mission was substantively useful.”



Photo by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT PAO

*Sgt. 1st Class James Reichert and Staff Sgt. Matthew Bonchi of the 303rd Tactical Psychological Operations Detachment pass out school supplies and backpacks to the children in Ibrahim Sallal, Iraq, Feb. 3. Soldiers of Co. B, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) air-assaulted into the village early that morning to conduct searches.*

# First spring crop: Iraqi soldiers become new NCOs

Spc. Chris McCann  
2nd BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI)

MAHMUDIYAH, Iraq — The Iraqi army has historically been top-heavy, giving leadership responsibility to officers and officers alone. Enlisted soldiers were not afforded much responsibility or authority. But the “backbone” of the U.S. Army is the noncommissioned officer corps — charged with leading and caring for the troops and their well-being, while officers plan and execute operations.

To help build the Iraqi Army into a well-oiled and highly functioning force, the 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) has worked extensively with the 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division to train new NCOs in the soldier and leadership skills necessary for success, graduating a class of about 30 NCOs in a ceremony at the Iraqi Army Compound in Mahmudiyah, Iraq, Feb. 21.

“The principle is the same as in the U.S. Army,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Mahoney, command sergeant major for the 2nd BCT. “It’s an entry-level course on the fundamentals of being an NCO.”

“If the Iraqi leadership will delegate duties and responsibilities to new NCOs, they will become a force multiplier,” Mahoney said.

Training Iraqi soldiers is a critical part of the 2nd BCT’s mission in Iraq, he added.

“Our main emphasis here is to partner with and train Iraqi Security Forces,” said Mahoney. “One of our efforts is to develop

the enlisted leadership within the ISF so they can provide better service for the good citizens of Iraq.”

The brigade’s efforts — and those of the Iraqi army leadership — have been bearing fruit.

“The course was ‘too easy,’ said Sgt. Ali Kazam Radban, a new graduate, using a phrase he learned from American Soldiers.

“We learned to search cars, read maps, basic maneuvers and mounted and dismounted patrols. Dismounted patrolling and map reading were my favorite parts, because I like learning new things like that, and going out and seeing the surrounding areas is good too, because I’m pretty familiar with this town.”

The course culminated with a two-hour dismounted patrol of the town of Mahmudiyah, as the students put their skills to work securing street corners for their fellow soldiers moving in the market and various neighborhoods.

Sgt. 1st Class John Lindsey, a military transition team leader, assisted with much of the course.

“They’ve learned techniques in patrolling, inspecting houses and vehicles, and how to teach physical training,” Lindsey explained. “They’ve also had several classes such as first aid, training on different weapons systems like hand grenades, AK-47s and DShKa machine guns.”

The soldiers were eager to learn for the most part, said Lindsey.

“They’re doing well. (Sgt. Maj. Wessam) Muhammad did an assessment of them,” he

said. “Some were having trouble, but the leaders have been working with them, just like in our (American) Warrior Leaders Course.”

Muhammad, the primary instructor for the course, agreed that the students were very successful.

“The soldiers are doing well, of course,” he said. “They’re learning a lot of new information. Before, many soldiers only knew how to kill, and most of those are gone now.

“The new American skills are helping a great deal. The U.S. Soldiers are giving us a lot of knowledge and skill to our Iraqi soldiers.”

More than 110 Iraqis have graduated from the WLC since the program started, and many are continuing to go to other courses, learning to be snipers and mechanics.

After the graduation ceremony, where the new NCOs recited the Iraqi NCO creed, the top three graduates were presented coins by Multi-National Corps-Iraq Command Sgt. Maj. Neil Ciotola.

“I want this to be a reminder,” Ciotola said through an interpreter, “of your obligation to your country. I want this to be a reminder of your obligation to pass on what you have learned.

“If you love Iraq, together we will make this the paradise God intended it to be for all people. I want to come here on vacation one day.”

The meaning was not lost on the soldiers.

“I am very proud to be an Iraqi NCO,” Kazam Radban said. “I am very proud the Americans have taught us so much.”



Master Sgt. Wessam Muhammad of the 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and Sgt. 1st Class John Lindsey of the 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, (LI) patrol the streets of Mahmudiyah, Iraq, Feb. 19 with new Iraqi soldiers during their final dismounted patrol during the Warriors Leaders Course for new noncommissioned officers. The 2-15 military transition team worked extensively with the soldiers during the course to help teach basic leadership and soldier skills.

Photo by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT PAO



*Spc. David Colon  
2nd BSTB, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI)*

**CAMP STRIKER** — It was a clear, warm evening, just like any other in Iraq. Men, women and children were taking care of their daily chores as they heard a distant buzzing sound. Little did they know it was the Shadow descending on the terrorists a few houses down.

Soldiers from the Shadow Unmanned Aerial Vehicle platoon, Company B, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) use the Shadow on a regular basis to monitor what is going on in the neighborhoods of Iraq. This platoon is the first Shadow UAV platoon the 2nd BCT has ever deployed with.

“The Shadow UAV platoon has added an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability to the 2nd BCT that previously only existed at division and higher levels,” said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Harrison, the 2nd BSTB commander.

“The Shadow allows the brigade to obtain information about areas of interest and to see who or what is traveling through those areas. It also gives the brigade commander and task force commanders live information about what is happening on an objective.”

The Shadow is just like any other aircraft, but what makes it unique is the absence of a pilot inside. Instead of the cockpit being inside of the plane, it is located in a Humvee. The Shadow can be flown virtually anywhere in theater, if needed.

The goal of the Soldiers operating the Shadow is to keep constant watch on the Iraqi neighborhoods in order to keep them safe from terrorists, as well as supporting the troops on the ground.

“We are the eyes and ears of the brigade commander,” said Sgt. Dylan Neill, who serves as a 2nd BSTB standardization operator. “We give the commander the opportunity to get actual imagery of any part of the brigade’s area of operation.”

The powerful camera mounted in the fuselage of the aircraft allows for the support of the troops on the ground by conducting reconnaissance, developing targets and finding possible threats, to include improvised explosive devices.

During a recent use of the Shadow, Soldiers of the 2nd BSTB were able to detect and relay to ground forces the location of a terror-

ist in the Mahmudiyah, Iraq area.

The mission payload operator was controlling the camera searching for enemy activity near the target house, when he noticed a terrorist fleeing from the house. He immediately pinpointed the location of the terrorist using the camera’s crosshairs so the troops on the ground could follow and detain him.

While the MPO was controlling the camera, the aerial vehicle operator was maneuvering the plane to support the MPO. In the mean time, the mission commander was communicating with the units, reporting where the enemy was and what possible threat they might encounter.

“Each person in the Shadow platoon is qualified to be a aerial vehicle operator and a mission payload operator,” Neill said of the mission. “We get a lot of interesting missions here.”

The mission helped to keep the people of the town safe, letting the ground forces know of the location of the terrorist. They were then able to detain the terrorist with the intelligence they received from the Shadow UAV platoon members.

The Iraqi local nationals have nicknamed the Shadow “The Fly,” because of the buzzing sound it makes when it’s locked on to its target, flying at low altitudes, as its big eye

reports their every movement.

Since the platoon’s arrival in Iraq, they have found IEDs, mortar rounds, enemy weapon cache sites and two anti-aircraft artillery guns.

On another occasion, members of the platoon used the Shadow to catch four terrorists burying IEDs in a road.

On more than one occasion, the platoon has guided the ground troops towards enemy targets and warned them of threats in their paths.

“The UAV team has flown over 1,840 mission hours since the brigade’s transfer of authority in September,” Harrison said.

With the intelligence the Shadow platoon provides, unit commanders have received an added benefit enabling them to direct their Soldiers on the battlefield and make enhanced critical decisions during operations. This added benefit has earned the platoon’s nickname, “commander’s eye in the sky.”

“The brigade has come to depend upon the intelligence it receives from the Shadow UAV and it (the brigade) could not operate as successfully or remain as agile as it has in Iraq’s terrain without the Shadow,” Harrison said. “The UAV platoon Soldiers are well trained and motivated ... They are writing the book on how to support a BCT with UAVs.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie, 2nd BCT PAO

*Spc. Timothy Elkins (right), a 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) unmanned aerial vehicle operator, shows his platoon leader, Chief Warrant Officer Corey Lefebvre (left), the flight path of the Shadow.*



Photo by Pfc. Kevin Hladilek, 2nd BSTB, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI)

## SQUEEZING ON A TOUCH OF HOME

*Pfc. Miranda Mutimer, a food service specialist with the 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), decorates a birthday cake at the Commando Café on Camp Striker, Iraq.*

*When time and mission constraints allow, Soldiers make cakes for their comrades-in-arms' birthdays while deployed to Baghdad.*

## Talented civilians lend a helping hand to Soldiers in need

*Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie  
2nd BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI)*

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq — On almost every camp, forward operating base and patrol base, renovations are being made to improve the quality of life for the Soldiers who work and reside there.

To assist with the many renovations, there are civilian contractors in country to help Soldiers get the job done.

Recently, civilians from Kellogg, Brown and Root, a company that assists the military, have helped to make the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) Tactical Operation Center feel more like home.

"I am here to help the Soldiers," said Randy Frnka, a KBR carpenter. "My main goal is to make them feel like they are at home, and I like seeing them happy."

Frnka and his crew, Carlito Salvador and Felix Remocaldo, who are both carpenters, spend at least 12 hours each day making and installing items for the Soldiers.

"We have made memorials, cabinets, desks and adjustable shelves," Frnka said. "We do it all."

With Frnka's deep passion to help the military, he decided to leave his own business in Texas and deploy to Iraq.

"I have been a carpenter for 37 years," he said as he installed cabinets in the operations center. "But I wanted to do something else to help."

Frnka even asks his friends in the United States to help him out sometimes.

"I had one of my friends send me a bunch of stuff that I wasn't able to get here," he said of the supplies he uses to build things. "I

have also taught the guys who work for me how to build things by hand."

Frnka and his team's work can be seen throughout the center.

"Randy and his crew have been tasked to do various projects for the brigade," said Sgt. Maj. Johnny Kea, the brigade future operations sergeant major. "He has received excellent reviews on the quality of the products ... His great skills support the Soldiers in Iraq."

Frnka also makes it a priority to complete all tasks given to him. If there is something that needs to be fixed, then he will make sure he does it.

"Randy has seen all projects from start to finish," Kea said. "He takes great pride in his work and supporting the Soldiers."

Although Frnka has been a carpenter for 37 years, his team is new to the trade. However, Frnka takes time out to train them.

"These guys are like my sons," Frnka said of Salvador and Remocaldo. "I taught them everything they know."

The team is also responsible for projects around the Camp Striker, Iraq area. They have built all the cabinets for the Sather Air Base, Iraq dining facility. And they do specialty work as well.

"The unique thing is that I do not use tools to measure things," Frnka said and he showed Soldiers some of his products. "I use my eyes to calibrate things."

Frnka's calibrated eye gets the job done, according to the Soldiers who have seen his work.

"The projects the civilians have done in the (operational center) look really nice," commented Sgt. Anthony Fusco, the 2nd

BCT engineer noncommissioned officer in charge. "They are friendly and will help in any way they can."

Frnka's team plans on continuing supporting the Soldiers as much as they can.

"I am glad I can help and I like to," added Remocaldo. "Helping the Soldiers makes me happy."



Photo by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT PAO

*Felix Remocaldo, a carpenter with Kellogg, Brown and Root, takes old pieces of wood off the walls before installing new cabinets in an office at the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) tactical operations center walls at Camp Striker, Iraq.*



*Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) receive congratulations after a ceremony in which they were awarded Army Commendation Medals for a recent mission. The Soldiers, all snipers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-14, were decorated for participation in a particularly dangerous counter-insurgency operation. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div. LI))*

Photo by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI)

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