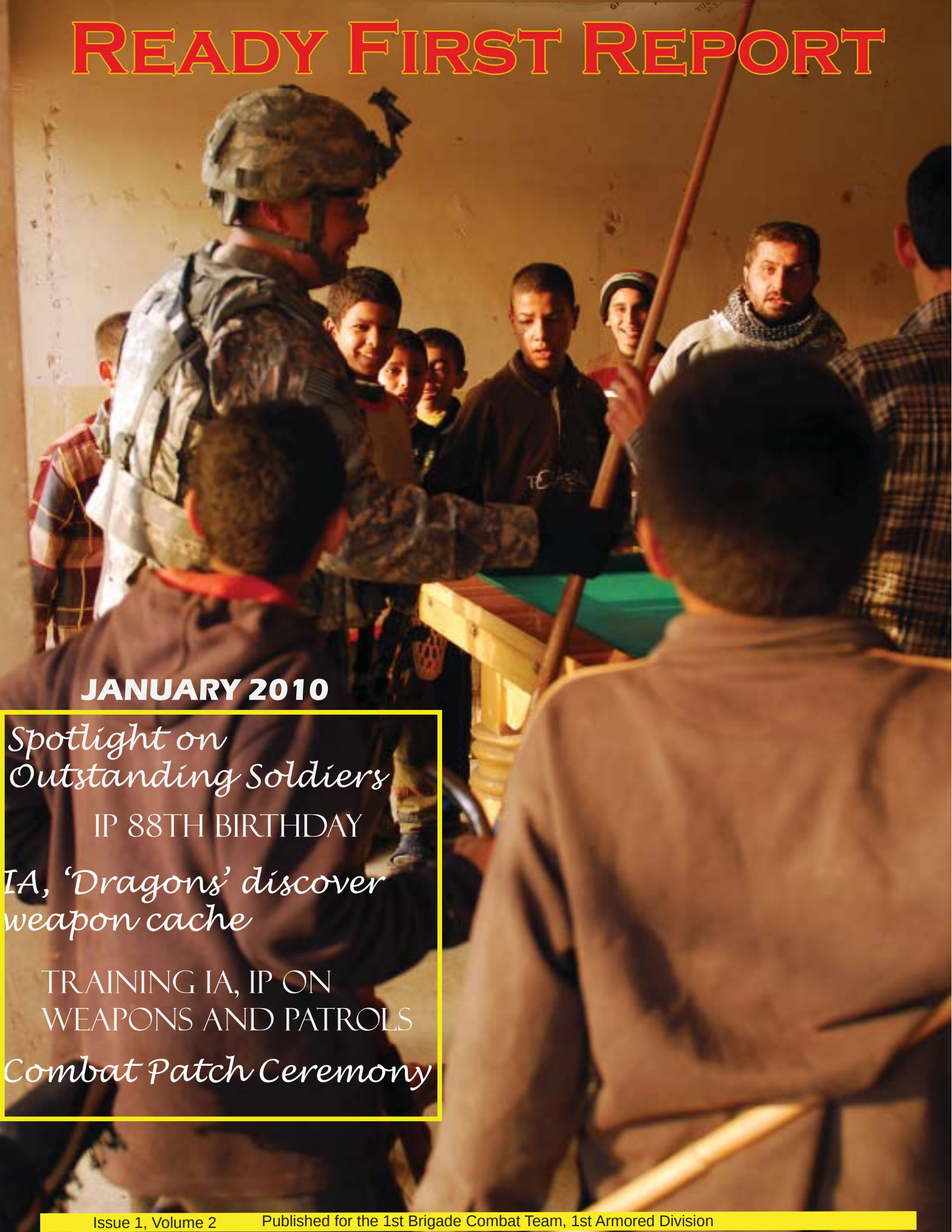


READY FIRST REPORT

A soldier in camouflage gear and a helmet is interacting with a group of children and a man in a scarf. They are in a room with a pool table. The soldier is looking down at something in his hands, and the children are looking at him with interest. The man in the scarf is looking on. The room has a yellow wall and a pool table with a green felt top.

JANUARY 2010

*Spotlight on
Outstanding Soldiers*

IP 88TH BIRTHDAY

*IA, 'Dragons' discover
weapon cache*

TRAINING IA, IP ON
WEAPONS AND PATROLS

Combat Patch Ceremony

The Ready First Combat Team just passed an important milestone: our first 30 days after assuming responsibility of the Kirkuk province. Since our partnership ceremony, we have detained suspected insurgents, hundreds of route clearing missions, discovered weapons in hidden caches, begun projects to improve the quality of life and security of the Kirkuk province and spent hundreds of hours training and working with our partners in the Iraqi Security Forces. I'm anticipating even more progress in our months here.

We will soon be witnessing a point in the history of Iraq, the Iraqi Parliamentary elections, where the Ready First Combat Team will play a significant role. We currently are contributing substantially to the training of the Iraqi Security Forces which will result in a secure province during the elections. What we all do now will ultimately allow Iraq to become a fully functional and prosperous society. What we have accomplished in the 30 days since assuming responsibility is tremendous, and is only made possible by each and every leader and Soldier. I'm proud of each and every one of you. The Ready First Combat Team is able to do what we do because of the support we get, both from our friends, families and fellow Soldiers back home. Their hard work and sacrifice is even more significant than ours because they are keeping the footprint on Fort Bliss running in our absence. I appreciate everything the Ready First Combat Team is doing and look forward to the rest of mission. Stay Ready First!

Col. Larry Swift
Brigade Commander
1st HBCT, 1st AD

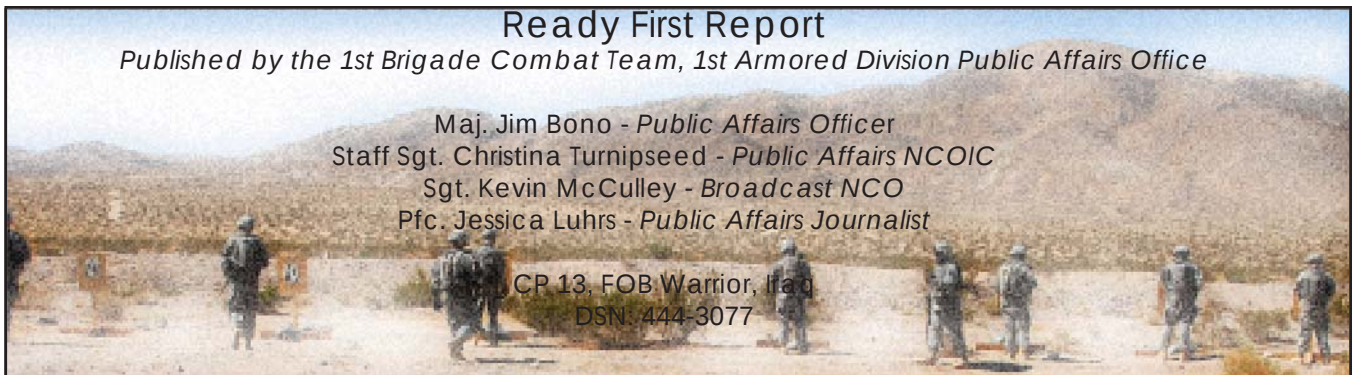


Ready First Report

Published by the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs Office

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JANUARY 2010

Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 37th Armor, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, "Dragons" of Fort Bliss, Tx. along with their Iraqi Army partners search for weapons caches during a joint patrol with the Iraqi Army outside of Kirkuk, Iraq, Dec. 30.



IA and "Dragons" discover weapons cache

U.S. Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs
1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

During a patrol near Kirkuk, Iraq, Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 37th Armor, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, "Dragons" of Fort Bliss, Tx., along with their partners at the 2-47th Battalion, Iraqi Army 12th Division, discovered multiple weapons caches buried throughout fields, Dec. 30.

During the patrol, with assistance from, Bryan, a U.S. Army Specialized Search Dog, the IA and "Dragons" uncovered weapons caches containing a Russian 240, five 120mm mortars, various ammo, grenade fuses, RKG rockets, night vision goggles and materials for home-made explosives, according to Cpt. Bryan Hartman, a native of Eagar, Az. and commander for the "Dragons."

The IA checked the site because of a tip they had received of insurgent activity in the area, according to Lt. Col. Ghanim Hussain Shbib, battalion commander of 2-47 Batt. They were first noticed because of the distinct markings, each cache had a large rock pointing towards it and they were all in the same area, according to Lt. Col. Ghanim. Upon discovering the pattern of large rocks the IA notified the other members of the IA and our "Dragon" partners, a broad search was conducted of the area using the SSD and heavy-duty metal detectors, according to Cpt. Hartman.

After the discovery of the caches the IA secured the contraband and took it to their compound for further investigation and collection of evidence, according to Capt. Hartman. In the villages surrounding the caches, the IA had the land owners sign an agreement stating they will not harbor terrorists or allow caches to be on their land, according to Capt. Hartman. This contract is a big step it no longer allows the people in the area to remain neutral, they now must turn in the insurgents or risk being arrested, according to Capt. Hartman. The discoveries made today will hinder enemy operation and will make this area safer for U.S. Forces, the Iraqi Security Forces and the people of the area, according to Capt. Hartman.

A Soldier of 2nd Platoon, Bravo Company 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, shows his Meghdad Iraqi Police Partners, how to assemble and disassemble weapons during the joint training at the range Dec. 29.



Iraqi Police during the range with their partners from 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, Dec. 29, after learning how to assemble and disassemble weapons systems.



A Meghdad Iraqi Policeman learning how to disassemble a M-4, during a joint training range, Dec. 29.



A Soldier of 2nd Platoon, Bravo Company 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, shows his shooting skills during the joint training at the range Dec. 29.



A Soldier of 2nd Platoon, Bravo Company 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, shows his Meghdad Iraqi Police Partners, how to assemble and disassemble weapons during the joint training at the range Dec. 29.



MEN BOND OVER WEAPONS

U.S. Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs
1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

The Soldiers from 2nd Plt., B-Co., 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, “Barbarians” and the police officers of the Meghdad Iraqi Police Station, taught each other how to use and perform basic functions to their weapons at a range on Dec. 29, 2009 for training on weapons systems.

The Meghdad IP and Soldiers receiver training in the disassembling and assembling of the IP’s Avtomat Kalashnikova 47 (AK-47) and the “Barbarians” M4 and how to also shoot each other’s weapons; safely and efficiently, according to Pfc. Mason Casper, a native of Portland, Organ, and a infantryman with the “Barbarians.”

“I’m glad we have this opportunity to train our Meghdad IP partners on the use of these different weapons systems,” said 1st Lt. Gavin Shnieder, a native of Milton, Wash. and the 2nd platoon leader with B-Co. “Not only did we successfully complete the training we were able to bond as partners.”

“I think this training shows we work together with uniformity, we know their weapons, they know ours,” said Spc. Jason Myers, a native of Anderson, Ind. and a infantryman with the “Barbarians.”

The “Barbarians” were all very impressed the Meghdad IP put together an efficient and safe range, said 1st Lt. Shnieder. It shows how quickly they are already making progress. This progress can be attributed to the partnership with the U.S. forces and the training the Meghdad IP do every day, according to 1st Lt. Ali Adnan, the training officer for the Meghdad IP.

Every day the Meghdad IP receive training in either First Aid, arrest techniques, weapon techniques, human rights, maintenance of weapons and 30 others, according to 1st Lt. Ali. The training is part of a much broader cooperation between Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces.

This training today has truly benefited the Meghdad IP, we have all learned so much from the training today and are looking forward to continuing this partnership with the U.S. Forces, according to 1st Lt. Ali Adnan.



Soldiers of the "Blackhawk" Color Guard of 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Tx. during their combat patch ceremony, on Jan. 19, at Forward Operating Base Warrior.



"Blackhawk" Soldiers of 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Tx. receive their combat patches from Col. Larry Swift, commander of the Ready First Combat Team, on Jan. 19.



A Soldier with HHC, BDE, 1/1 AD receives an AAM during the combat patch ceremony.



"Blackhawk" Soldiers of 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Tx. receive their combat patches from Command Sgt. Maj. James Daniels, command sergeant major of the Ready First Combat Team, on Jan. 19, at Forward Operating Base Warrior.



A Soldier with 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Tx. receives his combat patch from Lt. Col. Patricia Sellers, the commander of 1-1 STB.

READY FIRST EARNS COMBAT PATCH

U.S. Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs
1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq



Soldiers of the 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, also known as the 'Ready First Combat Team' of Fort Bliss, Tx. joined the highly respected ranks of the 'Old Ironsides' combat veterans, Jan. 19 at their various bases around Kirkuk, Iraq when the RFCT earned the right to wear the 'Old Ironsides' combat patch.

The Shoulder-Sleeve Insignia-Former Wartime Service, also known as the combat patch is authorized for wear on the right-sleeve of the uniform by Soldiers who have participated in combat operations.

With the 'Old Ironsides' being the oldest and most recognizable armor division in the U.S. Army having the authority to wear their combat patch a true honor to all of the Soldiers of the RFCT.

But to Soldiers that have never deployed before this day has a special meaning. Pfc. Michael Crownover, a "Punisher" with 3rd Platoon, Delta Co., 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment of the RFCT, sees his combat patch as a symbol of respect.

"I joined the military two years ago, and since joining I have looked-up to and respected the Soldiers who have the honor of wearing a combat patch, today I am one of them," said Pfc. Crownover.

Pfc. McClain Meador, also a "Punisher" Soldier, looked at it as the filling of a gap.

"Ever since I joined it felt as if something were missing, now I know what that something was; my combat patch and not that I have it I feel balanced," said Pfc. Meador.

The combat patches were presented by Col. Larry Swift, commander of the RFCT and Command Sgt. Maj. James Daniels, command sergeant major of the RFCT and the command teams of the battalions at various combat patch ceremonies.

"It is a true honor to be able to wear the 'Old Ironsides' combat patch," said Col. Swift, during a ceremony. "This is the only patch you will see on my right-sleeve."



Stacy Barrios, a Public Diplomacy Officer with the Kirkuk PRT of the U.S. Embassy along with members of the U.S. Forces answer questions that the students of the University of Kirkuk had involving the future of Kirkuk and schooling in the U.S., Jan. 11.

ESU, PRT, U.S. Forces meet with K.U. students



U.S Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs

1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

More than 100 students of the University of Kirkuk met with Iraqi 3rd Battalion Emergency Service Unit, a member of the Kirkuk Provincial Reconstruction Team of the U.S. Embassy and Soldiers of the 1st Platoon, D-Company, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, currently attached to 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division also known as the "Punishers," to hold an open discussion at the University of Kirkuk, Jan. 11.

During the discussion the students were able to ask questions regarding concerns they might have or anything they would want to know about the ESU and find out information on universities in the U.S.

Col. Fouad Siniora, the deputy commander of the 3rd Batt., and Maj. Kamal A.El Kamali, director of public relations for 3rd Batt., ESU were present to answer the questions concerning the ESU.

Many of the questions the students had were linked to security issues and general questions about the ESU activities in the area.

The ESU assured the students that they were working to make the university more secure to help them learn, but it needed to be a joint effort, according to Maj. Kamal, during the meeting with the students.

You (the students) are a part of the people that will help to make this country prosper, you are the future of Kirkuk and we (ESU) will help to protect you as long as you help us, according to Maj. Kamal.

For the ESU to do their job in capturing the insurgents the students need to help with reporting any suspicious activities that they notice, according to Maj. Kamal.

The university is responsible for assisting the ESU in keeping this area safe by reporting crimes, according to Maj. Kamal.

Col. Fouad even gave out his phone number to the students so they could report the ac-

tivities to him directly, according to 1st Lt. Patrick Murphy, platoon leader for the "Punishers."

Also during the meeting the students were able to ask questions of Stacy Barrios, a Public Diplomacy Officer with the Kirkuk PRT of the U.S. Embassy.

During the discussion with Barrios the students talked about their hopes, dreams and concerns for the future. Many of the students have hopes and dreams of learning English and having opportunities to learn at universities in the U.S., according to students of the University of Kirkuk.

Barrios informed the students of the different scholarships and grants available to both students and the professors through the U.S. Embassy. One of the professors for the University of Kirkuk is currently slated to go to the U.S. this year to build his skills to educate his students, according to Barrios.

The main concern, of the students, for their futures was the availability of jobs following their graduation of Kirkuk University, according to the students.

Barrios responded with, no one but you (the students) is responsible for finding a job after graduation, but the Iraqi government along with the U.S. government is building the economy in Kirkuk which will help the graduates find jobs.

The students were also able to fill out a sheet of paper of concerns and issues they had to give to Maj. Kamal and the U.S. Forces privately, according to Maj. Kamal.

Maj. Kamal, members of the PRT and the U.S. Forces plan to have many more of these meetings with the students around Kirkuk, so the future of Iraq will have a better understanding of the purpose of the ESU and ways to better their future, according to Maj. Kamal.



A University of Kirkuk student asks Stacy Barrios, a Public Diplomacy Officer with the Kirkuk PRT of the U.S. Embassy along with members of the U.S. Forces a question, Jan. 11.

Students with the University of Kirkuk fill out questionnaires about issues and concerns they have with the school and Kirkuk, Jan. 11.



Col. Fouad Siniora, the deputy commander of the 3rd Batt., and Maj. Kamal A.El Kamali, director of public relations for 3rd Batt., ESU answer the questions concerning the ESU at the University of Kirkuk, Jan. 11.



- READY FIRST



A member of the Iraqi Police looks on as a Soldier with the Ready First Combat Team pulls security outside a IP Station near Kirkuk, Iraq.



A Soldier with 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team.



A Soldier with 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division pulls security for his fellow Soldiers during a patrol.

Capt. Dennis Maher, commander of Bravo Co., 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, hands out popcorn to children during a patrol.



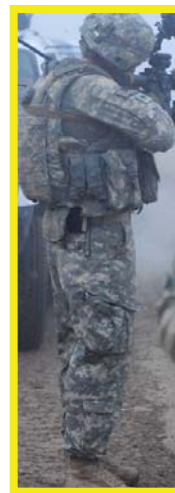
COMBAT TEAM -



Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, in Rihad during a humanitarian aid mission.



Members of the Iraqi army with a weapons cache they found near Kirkuk, Iraq.



Soldiers with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, patrol a field in search of weapons.



Cpl. Omar Medina, a native of Oakland, Calif., and the communications non-commissioned officer in charge for B-Co., 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, currently attached to 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division has overcome much hardship to be where he is today.



A Soldier's Story: From streets to Soldier

U.S Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs

1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR,
KIRKUK, Iraq**

Most members of the military have a defining moment in their life when they think to themselves, "I want to become a servicemember."

This moment for Cpl. Omar Medina, a native of Oakland, Calif., and the communications non-commissioned officer in charge for B-Co., 1st Battalion, 30th

Infantry Regiment, currently attached to 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, was when he began looking at the situations in his neighborhood and then the lives his cousins, who had joined the military, were currently living.

"The area I grew up in was pretty bad, a lot of people I knew were members of gangs, drugs were made available to all, robberies and shootings were a common thing," said Cpl. Medina. "I knew I had limited choices to get away from these situations, this community is one of those places if you didn't go off to college or join the military you were just stuck." "I thought about going to college, my teachers always told me I had the potential, but I knew it wouldn't give me the discipline to stay out of trouble," said Cpl. Medina. "Then my cousins, who are Marines, told me how well they were doing in the military and how they were far away from the situations back home."

"At that moment I began to consider the military," said Cpl. Medina.

During his junior year in high school Cpl. Medina took the ASVAB, just to see how he would do and immediately the Army recruiter began speaking to him and offering him any job in the Army he wanted, according to Cpl. Medina.

A year after taking the ASVAB and speaking to the recruiter for the first time Cpl. Medina was signing the contract to be a Soldier as a private first class and working with communications, according to Cpl. Medina.

Now the 21-year-old corporal with only three years of service is currently the youngest NCO-IC in B-Co., and does work that makes him stand out in front of his fellow Soldiers, according to 1st Lt. Kirk Chalmers, the executive officer for B-Co.



Cpl. Omar Medina, a native of Oakland, Calif., and the communications non-commissioned officer in charge for B-Co., 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, currently attached to 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division with 1st Lt. Kirk Chalmers, the executive officer for B-Co, a leader who is inspired by Cpl. Medina's hard work and leadership abilities.

"We have many Soldiers that stay in the same rank for years," according to 1st Lt. Chalmers. "But with the leadership qualities that Cpl. Medina possess he will go very far in the military." He is known as the Soldier who never accepts no for an answer, according to 1st Lt. Chalmers. There is not one question he will not find the answer to or an obstacle he cannot overcome.

With all the work Cpl. Medina put into leaving the situations he grew-up in it is hard to believe he wants to return to his hometown to work. It is hard to think about where I would be without the military probably hooked on drugs, in a gang or in jail, according to Cpl. Medina. This is one of the reasons I want to go back now, I want the people there to know they have the same option.

"To this day when I go home two or three of the people I went to school with have either been killed or were in jail and I also still see the same drug deals, robberies and shootings occurring just with different people," said Cpl. Medina.

The Army has given me something no other option in life could; self-discipline, according to Cpl. Medina. This ability will enable me to go to college and get a degree in criminal justice so I can go back to my hometown and get the drugs off the streets that are influencing the children in a negative way. All of the leadership in B-Co sees tremendous potential in Cpl. Medina and are all confident no matter what he does he will succeed, according to 1st Lt. Chalmers.



Cpl. Omar Medina, a native of Oakland, Calif., and the communications non-commissioned officer in charge for B-Co., 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, currently attached to 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, checking the communication status at the B-Company control point at Forward Operating Base Warrior.

Pfc. Matthew Zumbrun, a Baltimore, Md. native, and a scout dismount with 2nd Platoon, Alpha Troop, 6th Battalion, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division also known as "House of Pain", was recently named the Task Force Marne Hero of the North, for an outstanding performance during a dismounted patrol, near Kirkuk, Iraq.



Soldier denys IED makers their 'boom'



U.S Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs
1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

A Fort Bliss, Tx. Soldier was recently named the Task Force Marne Hero of the North at Forward Operating Base Warrior, Iraq; after outstanding performance during a dismounted patrol.

Pfc. Matthew Zumbrun, a Baltimore, Md. native, and a scout dismount with 2nd Platoon, Alpha Troop, 6th Battalion, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division also known as "House of Pain", received this recognition from Task Force Marne, after he discovered a possible improvised explosive device site, near an Iraqi Army Compound.

I am very surprised by all the attention, when I discovered the site I was just doing my job along with the rest of "House of Pain", according to Pfc. Zumbrun.

During the patrol Pfc. Zumbrun noticed a bottle lying on the side of the road and after getting closer to the bottle he immediately smelled fuel and saw brush and rocks covering a hole, according to Pfc. Zumbrun.

After further exploration copper wires and other homemade explosive materials were found around the area, according to Pfc. Zumbrun.

The area the IED materials were discovered at is a highly used route by the Soldiers of the Ready First Combat Team and their Iraqi Army counterparts, according to Sgt. Daniel Agriesti, a Venice, Fl. native and a team leader with "House of Pain."

Everyone is very lucky Pfc. Zumbrun was alert and noticed irregularities in the area, according to Sgt. Agriesti.

I am very honored to be recognized at this level it feels very awarding, according to Pfc. Zumbrun. It shows everyone out here no matter how boring the countless patrols can be we can still make a difference and save lives while we are on them.

When asked if he had anything else he would like to say, Pfc. Zumbrun said, "Recon, House of Pain."

Bandits name Soldier of the Quarter

U.S Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs
1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs



FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

Pfc. Rosemarie Brown, a native of Houston, Tx. and a cook with F-Co., 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, also known as the Ready First Combat Team, was named the Soldier of the Quarter for the Bandit battalion. Pfc. Brown received this honor because of an outstanding performance at the Soldier board by demonstrating her abilities as a Soldier to the senior non-commissioned officers at Joint Service Station McHenry, near Kirkuk, Iraq, according to Command Sgt. Mjr. Robert Blakey, the command sergeant major of 1-37 Arm. Reg., 1/1 AD and a native of Washington, D.C. "It feels so good to be named the Soldier of the Quarter," said Pfc. Brown. "It really makes me stand out, I went against all male Soldiers and still came out the winner, it is very powerful."

She is an outstanding Soldier, always willing to go above and beyond what is asked of her, according to Staff Sgt. Ashanta Smith, of Buffalo, N.Y., and the ration non-commissioned officer in charge, 1-37 Arm. Reg, 1/1 AD and one of Pfc. Brown's non-commissioned officers. This is why I chose Pfc. Brown to represent F-Co. at the board; she has shown a lot of progression in her skills and was dedicated to her studies for the board, according to Staff Sgt. Smith. Some of the topics Pfc. Brown was questioned on included, weapons knowledge, land navigation, code of conduct, first aid, customs and courtesies and physical training, according to Pfc. Brown. It was a lot to study but I just worked hard on my weak areas anytime I had a chance, according to Pfc. Brown. The studying is not over just yet for Pfc. Brown, she will be competing in the Ready First Combat Team brigade board, Jan. 10, for Soldier of the Quarter for the brigade.



Bandit Soldier of the Quarter Pfc. Rosemarie Brown, a native of Houston, Tx. and a cook with F-Co., 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division with Staff Sgt. Ashanta Smith, of Buffalo, N.Y., and the ration non-commissioned officer in charge, 1-37 Arm. Reg, 1/1 AD the NCO that recommended Pfc. Brown for the Soldier of the Quarter Board.



Kirkuk Iraqi policemen hold the flowers given to honor the fallen IP by 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, currently attached to 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, during the ceremony honoring the 88th Iraqi Police Birthday at the Kirkuk Training Center, Jan. 8.

Major Gen. Turhan Abdalrah, provincial director of police in Kirkuk, Major Gen. Jamal Tahir, provincial police chief, Staff Major Gen. Abdul Amir Alzader, commander of the 12th Iraqi Army Division and Staff Brigadier Gen. Ayad, before the ceremony honoring the 88th Iraqi Police Birthday at the Kirkuk Training Center, Jan. 8.



An Iraqi policeman salutes the fallen policemen of the year during the ceremony honoring the 88th Iraqi Police Birthday at the Kirkuk Training Center, Jan. 8.

88th IP Birthday



U.S. Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs
1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

Everyone thinks the wealth of Kirkuk is the oil beneath the ground, the true wealth of Kirkuk is the Iraqi Police who sacrifice for the people of Kirkuk, according to Lt. Col. Daniel Cormier a Nashua, N.H. native and the commander for 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, currently attached to 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division.

These words were spoken at a celebration honoring the Iraqi Police in Kirkuk, according to Lt. Col. Cormier.

The ceremony; held at the IP Kirkuk Training Center, Jan. 8, hosted by Major Gen. Turhan Abdalrah, provincial director of police in Kirkuk, and attended by other distinguished guests.

Those guests included, Major Gen. Jamal Tahir, provincial police chief, Staff Major Gen. Abdul Amir Alzader, commander of the 12th Iraqi Army Division, Staff Brigadier Gen. Ayad, and Lt. Col. Cormier.

During the ceremony, Lt. Col. Cormier also spoke of how impressed he was with the leadership, bravery, professionalism and capability of the Kirkuk IP, according to Lt. Col. Cormier.

"Whenever I see the youth in the streets going to school, I see the shops and stores open and thriving, whenever I see children smiling- I know it is because of the hard work and efforts of the police and security forces," said Lt. Col. Cormier.

"The police serve with honor and sacrifice for the hope of a better future," said Lt. Col. Cormier.

During the ceremony to honor those that sacrificed their lives for a better future by serving in the Iraqi Police, Major Gen. Turhan and Lt. Col. Cormier both presented flowers.

After the flowers were presented the IP units paraded the field saluting, Major Gen. Turhan, followed by their trucks decorated for the occasion.

Also during the ceremony the unit's put on a demonstration of how they would handle a criminal situation. Members of the IP and Emergency Service Units demonstrated apprehending an insurgent; securing and clearing a crime scene, while the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team demonstrated defusing an improvised explosive device.

These policemen are the future of Iraq, according to Lt. Col. Cormier. The police are the true guardians of the nation and defenders of the citizens of Kirkuk.



Iraqi policemen salute the fallen policemen of the year during the ceremony honoring the 88th Iraqi Police Birthday at the Kirkuk Training Center, Jan. 8.

1-37, IA Weapon Cache: Making Kirkuk safer



Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 46th Iraqi Army Brigade, along with their partners from B-Company, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor of the Ready First Combat Team out of Fort Bliss, Tx., during a patrol on Jan. 4, south of Rihad, Iraq in search of weapons caches.

U.S. Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs

1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

Col. Hammad, the commander of 4th Battalion, 46th Iraqi Army Brigade, led his soldiers along with their U.S. partners from B-Company, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor of the Ready First Combat Team out of Fort Bliss, Tx., during a patrol on Jan. 4, south of Rihad, Iraq in search of weapons caches and insurgents.

This operation was fully led by the IA commander, Col. Hammad, after he received a tip about the location of

a possible weapons cache in the area and then notified the U.S. Forces, according to Col. Hammad. Upon the IA arrival to the area the soldiers pulled security while waiting for assistance from their U.S. Forces partners, according to Col. Hammad.

After the arrival of B-Co., 1st Batt., 37th Armor, the two patrolled the area with assistance from Military Working Dogs and metal detectors, according to Capt. Dennis Maher, an El Paso, Tx. native and the B-Co. 1st Batt., 37th Armor commander.

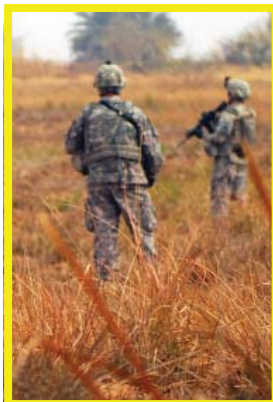
This operation is the foundation for the partnership between our Iraqi partners and the people of Iraq, according to Capt. Maher. Once they begin to make Iraq safer then the citizens will begin to put full trust into the IA.

Although we did not locate any weapons or insurgents, through our partnership we were able to disrupt the enemy operations in the area and we have also disrupted the movement of the insurgents, according to Capt. Maher.

By having patrols in the area the insurgents now know that the IA is onto them and will capture them and seize all weapons hidden in the area, according to Capt. Maher.

Soldiers from B-Company, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor of the Ready First Combat Team out of Fort Bliss, Tx., during a patrol on Jan. 4, south of Rihad, Iraq in search of weapons caches.





Soldiers from B-Company, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor of the Ready First Combat Team assist each other while searching for weapons caches.



Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 46th Iraqi Army Brigade, along with their partners from B-Company, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor of the Ready First Combat Team out of Fort Bliss, Tx., during a patrol on Jan. 4, south of Rihad, Iraq in search of weapons caches.

First joint patrol is just a small step



Major Hatam Nzli Knln, police chief for Hawijah Station 3 Iraqi Police along with 1st Lt. Anderson, handing out a humanitarian aid bag to a citizen of Hawijah during a patrol, Jan. 4.

U.S. Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs
1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

Hawijah Iraqi Police Station 3, soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 36th Iraqi Army Brigade along with their partners from the Mortar Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor of the Ready First Combat Team, also known as the “Bandits” of Fort Bliss, Tx., worked together for the first time in a combined dismounted patrol, Jan. 4, in the city of Hawijah, Iraq.

This mission was a small part of a larger mission that ISF and the “Bandits” will continue to work on together throughout their time here, according to 1st Sgt. Frederick Nash, a native of Colfax, La. and the first sergeant for HHC.

The main mission between the ISF and their “Bandit” partners is gaining the trust of the people in Hawijah and denying the violent extremist networks a safe haven here, according to 1st Sgt. Nash. Together ISF and the “Bandits” successfully completed the mission today but it was just a small step.

During this small step the IP, IA and “Bandits” were able to provide more than 150 bags of food and other household goods to families in need throughout the area, according to 1st Sgt. Nash.

The ISF and “Bandits” were also able to show the neighborhood they are here to help them and they care for the people in the city, according to Major Hatam Nzli Knln, police chief for Hawijah Station 3 Iraqi Police.

We also opened up the lines of communication by giving out numbers for the citizens to call to report any trouble, according to Major Hatam.

In the end we formed a better relationship with the citizens of Hawijah by doing this patrol, according to Major Hatam. They know we are here to support them and will do anything to keep the extremists out of their city.



Mending of broken windows

U.S. Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs
1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs



FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

With the broken windows, water leaking from the ceiling and crumbling walls, no one would ever guess that this building is actually a school, with over 150 high school age Iraqi girls currently studying at the location.

This school is the Khawola Bend Le, school for girls, and is the newest addition to the list of Women's Initiative Humanitarian Aid construction projects for; 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division of Fort Bliss, Tx., the Iraqi Security Forces and the people of Iraq, according to Capt. Peter Jones, 1-37 Arm. Reg. civil affairs team leader. Capt. Jones, met with Minister of Education for Rihad Habis, here on Dec. 15, to tour the school and a few of the other projects in the area, according to Capt. Jones.

"As soon as I began looking at the school, I knew we would want to take under this project," said Capt. Jones. "The condition of the school is not too bad and it is a school for the women of Iraq."

"It is especially important to build schools for the women of the country," said Capt. Jones.

"When a person is educated they are less likely to participate in insurgent activities."

"Within 3-4 months this project should be completed and the women of the area will finally have a school that is secure and safe to receive an education," said Capt. Jones.

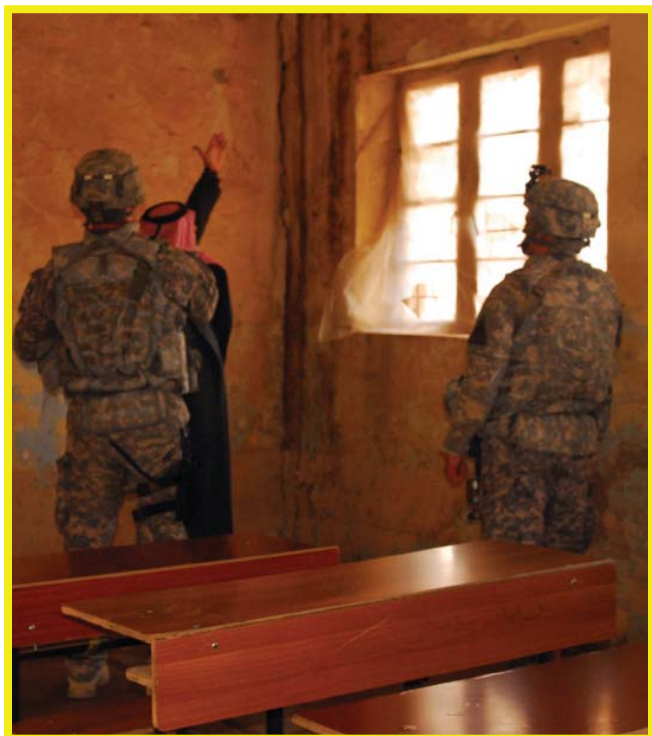
Projects like this one are becoming more and more important; the people of Iraq are learning that education for the country is key to security and prosperity for the country in the future, according to Capt. Jones.

Once the security and the economy begin to grow in the country, then Iraq will be able to stand on its own, according to Capt. Jones. An educated youth will truly stabilize this country. Not only is this project going to provide education for the women in the area, but

will also provide the people in the area with jobs, according to Capt. Jones. We hire local contractors to complete these projects, in hope to stimulate the local economy.

1-37 Arm. Reg. in conjunction with ISF and the people of Iraq are currently working on 30-40 projects in the area, according to Capt. Jones. Some of the projects we participate in include; canal cleanings, building of roads, factories for food, landfills, schools and other various humanitarian aid projects.

Even though insurgents continue to attack the area, 1-37 Arm. Reg. will not be deterred in their task to assist the people of Iraq, according to Capt. Jones.



Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, Civil Affairs Team, inspect an all girls school on Dec. 15. 1-37 Arm. Reg. recently added this school to their list of over 40 other projects they are currently working on.





Chaplain's Corner

2 Corinthians 4: 8 to 9 (NIV)

We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.

The Message translation of this verse says this, "We've been surrounded and battered by troubles, but we're not demoralized; we're not sure what to do, but we know that God knows what to do; we've been spiritually terrorized, but God hasn't left our side; we've been thrown down, but we haven't broken."

When the sailors of old faced the worst of the storms, they would call out to encourage one another with this statement of faith, "Hold Fast". When the breakers dashed and the billows rolled they called out, "Hold Fast." When the winds howled and the storm raged, and it seemed like everything was against them, they would call out, "Hold Fast".

As so I say to you when the stresses and strife of deployment life get you down, "Hold fast." When chaos, calamity, and confusion cloud your AO I say, "Hold Fast." When the tough tumultuous times of life begin to adversely affect your desire to drive on I say, "Hold Fast."

Because we are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed. Greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world.

Be encouraged,
CH (CPT) Ronald K. Hinton, Jr.