



# LIGHTNING STRIKES



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# An opportunity to lead the way



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Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy, 29th MPAD

# USD-C SPOTLIGHT



Sgt. 1st Class John Varney  
5th Squadron, 4th Cav. Regt.  
2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C



Sgt. 1st Class John Varney received the Purple Heart in July 2005 for shrapnel wounds he sustained to his lower-right forearm June 14, 2005 in the vicinity of Al Mushada.

At the time, Varney was the lead scout with 1st Squadron, 13th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division. The patrol he was part of was conducting a security mission when they heard a loud explosion nearby.

"Two Vehicle Born Improvised Explosive Devices attacked an Iraqi Army convoy escorted by members of our squadron, so we changed our mission and responded immediately," said Varney. "When we arrived to the scene, there were a million things going on and we focused on securing the perimeter, calling in medical evacuation, and treating the wounded."

One of the two VBIEDs failed to detonate completely and as a result, delayed rounds wounded Varney and his medic, who received shrapnel to his rear-right thigh.

"I didn't even realize I was wounded until I couldn't charge my weapon at the clearing barrel as our patrol was entering the forward operating base because I was busy taking care of my medic and addressing the rest of the situation," said Varney. "It was only then that I noticed the blood stains on my own uniform."

Varney and his medic were the only Soldiers wounded from their patrol, but Iraqi Army Soldiers were killed and several were wounded in the explosion, which made a lasting impression.

"Regardless of the situation you find yourself in, your training will take over, and you will execute in combat, the way you trained previously," said Varney. "It does not matter if that training was conducted six months ago, or 15 years ago, the 'muscle memory' stays with you."



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## Following in Dad's footsteps ...



# ... a Tropic Lightning legacy



Sgt. James Chung, right, the father of 1st Lt. Allen Chung, stands with another Soldier while serving in Vietnam with B Troop, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, the same unit his son now serves in.



Story by Maj. Mark Citarella, 29th MPAD  
Photos courtesy of 1st Lt. Allen Chung

For many young boys, wanting to grow up to be just like their dad is a part of their childhood. And for 1st Lt. Allen Chung, a platoon leader in B Troop, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division who is currently serving in Afghanistan, being a “Tropic Lightning” Soldier was something he aspired to from a very young age. His father, former Sgt. James Chung, served with the very same unit during the Vietnam War. When the younger Chung decided to become an officer in the United States Army, he knew the 25th Inf. Div. was where he wanted to be.

“When I selected my post back when I was going to school at West Point, I wanted to go to Hawaii,” he said. “I originally was supposed to be with 2nd Brigade. I ended up emailing the [squadron commander] from 3/4 Cav. asking for a transfer over. I thought it would be pretty cool to serve in the same unit as my dad.”

With the history and heritage of the 25th Inf. Div., the chain of command supported the request. And upon hearing that his son was going to be part of the same unit that he served in, Chung said his father was elated with the news of his son’s assignment. That family history within the unit is also a part of the younger Chung’s uniform.

“When he was at my commissioning ceremony, he actually pinned on the same sabers that he had on his Class A’s,” said Chung. “And they are the 3/4 Cav. Sabers.”

His father—and his service with the 25th Inf. Div.—was in part what led the younger Chung to join the Army, he said, adding that his father stressed the importance of being a leader and making a difference.

My dad told me stories about bad leadership,” he said. “And then he told me about good troop commanders and good platoon leaders and that inspired me. Hearing from him what a bad leader can cause in a unit and contrast that with what a good leader can do for a unit and that inspired me to want to be a leader in a cavalry troop.”

The Chung family story is one that resonates well within the history of the Tropic Lightning Division, while at the same time adding to the connection of father and son.

“I think Vietnam was a pretty pivotal time for the 25th and I know my dad was there,” said Chung. “And now I am here in Afghanistan, which I think is also a pivotal deployment for the 25th being in Afghanistan. There is definitely a lot of meaning there for me.”

Much like many father-son relationships, there are life lessons passed down from father to son, and the Chungs are no different.

“The thing I really wanted to be was a platoon leader in a cavalry unit and that’s where I am right now,” said the younger Chung. “I absolutely love the job. It’s everything I hoped it would be. The lessons my dad taught me from what he experienced as a Soldier and an NCO helped me to be the platoon leader, to lead the NCOs and Soldiers under my command. So, I definitely owe a lot to him in that regard.”



(TOP) Former Sgt. James Chung, left, looks on as his son, then 2nd Lt. Allen Chung, swears in as an officer of the U.S. Army during his commissioning ceremony. The younger Chung is currently serving as a platoon leader in the same unit his father served in more than 40 years ago.

(BELOW) 1st Lt. Allen Chung, a platoon leader with B Troop, 3rd Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt., 3rd BCT, 25th Inf. Div., kneels with a group of children in Afghanistan.

*Iraqi Army Soldiers with the 7th Iraqi Army Division use a remote arm to search the area around a simulated improvised explosive device during a training exercise at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, May 18.*



# Paving the Way

7th IA steps forward to clear local routes to future success, safety

Story by  
Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas  
4th AAB, 3rd Inf. Div.

Although violence in Iraq has decreased, the threat of improvised explosive devices still exist. Soldiers of Company A, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, are helping their Iraqi Army counterparts learn how to defeat this threat in an effort to make the streets of An-bar safer.

After working side-by-side with members of the 7th Iraqi Army Division for the past 11 months, U.S. Soldiers put the 7th IA Div. Soldiers to the test and hosted a culminating exercise at Al Asad Air Base, May 17-19 that focused on route-clearing procedures.

“We’re not going to be here for too much longer,” said Staff Sgt. Raul Gutierrez, a combat engineer with A Co., and New York City, N.Y., native. “So, it’s important for them to understand these route clearance techniques as they take will soon take on this critical mission by themselves.”

Gutierrez and his fellow Sol-

diers hid simulated explosives along a road and instructed the Iraqi troops to detect, interrogate and report the bomb-findings up to higher.

“We used the environment—twigs, trees branches, trash—to mask the IED,” said Spc. Shawn Leblanc, Avondell, Ariz., native, and member of Co. A, BSTB, 4th AAB, 3rd Inf. Div. “Everything was pretty much hidden very well. It made for very realistic training.”

Leblanc added that they tried to make the training as complex as possible, and the IA Soldiers located all IEDs but one.

“They have a very keen eye,” he said. “What may look normal to us is not necessarily normal to them. They know how the IEDs are placed. They see this and deal with this on a daily basis.”

Leblanc, who deployed to Iraq in 2007, said the Iraqi security forces have drastically improved their abilities to clear routes.

“We did some partnered route clearance on my last deployment,” he said, “but they had a lot to learn. This rotation it seems they have picked up a lot of things. They are more confident, I think they’ve progressed very

well.”

Reflecting back on his first deployment in 2003, Gutierrez agreed with Leblanc that the IA has improved and said they are ready to take the reins as the U.S. approaches its expected withdrawal deadline.

“In ’03 they were just driving around and getting hit and now they know how to approach (IEDs) and what to look for,” he said. “It feels good to be able to come back and see this big change. It’s definitely an accomplishment to know that I’ve had a hand in making a difference. They are in it to win it. They want to take charge, and we were able to help them do that. We’re the same people, from different places, fighting for the same cause.”



*Iraqi Army Soldiers with the 7th Iraqi Army Division use a remote arm to disassemble a simulated improvised explosive device during a training exercise held by Company A, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, at Al Asad Air Base. The exercise was a culminating training event that tested the IA Soldiers ability to react and respond to possible IEDs. (Photo by Pfc. Brian Chaney, 55th Com. Cam. Co.)*



*An Iraqi Army Soldier calls in a report of an IED during an exercise at Al Asad Air Base.*

# Rounds complete! 'Dragon' Bn. trains on mortars



*Spc. Shannon McEntyre, a mortar gunner with C Company, 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center, signals to a pole runner while re-aligning the aiming posts of the mortar during a training drill at Joint Security Station, Muthana. Soldiers from the unit trained on the mortars as a way to maintain proficiency with the weapon system.*

Story and photos by 1st Lt. Douglas Bengal, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.

In the sweltering heat of Iraq, on Joint Security Station Muthana, two squads of mortar men with C Company, 1st “Dragon” Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center hover wordlessly over their disassembled mortar systems—the calm before the storm.

The C Company mortar men were engaged in training on ground-mounted mortars, meaning that the mortars are not attached to a vehicle. After a round of training, some Soldiers were examined on their capabilities in setting up bipods and calibrating sights.

A sharp command of “Action!” breaks the tension and 10 Soldiers burst into a frenzy of activity. The crunch of gravel and clink of metal fill the air as ammunition bearers carry the 110-pound 120-mm mortar tubes and lock them into their 136-pound baseplates.

Assistant gunners spread the legs of bipods to their maximum width and swing clamps around the mortar tubes’ collar stops, fastening them. The braces are just enough to support a weapon with a bore-equivalent to that of an

M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank.

“There is a lot of teamwork that goes into setting up these mortars,” said Sgt. Daniel Schilling, a squad leader with C Company.

Gunners work the sight on the weapon like a Rubik’s cube, their practiced hands setting the standard deflection and elevation. Mortar men then stand aside, briefly, as the selected shooter for this iteration moves forward. He deftly connects the sight-unit to the bipod, hands moving in a frenzy, manipulating elevation and cross-level mechanisms until the two crucial bubbles on different axes level-out.

Finally satisfied, the shooter shouts “Gun up!” to the inspecting noncommissioned officers. The entire squad backs away from their tube, hands up and palms held outward to avoid the perception they had any contact with the mortar system after the shooter’s words were spoken.

“It’s great that we are getting hands-on practice on everything,” said Pfc. Justin Tijerina, a mortar man with C Company. “It’s not something we get to do a lot.”

After a careful inspection of the mortar setup, Schilling repeated the call of

“Gun up!” and Tijerina, the shooter, earned an expert qualification in this practice run.

“He did a great job,” Schilling said of Tijerina. “These young Soldiers continually impress me.”

Schilling’s quiet, but much-desired pronouncement of “Good job, out of action,” sets the squads to disassembling and repositioning their systems, each Soldier switching to a different role for another iteration.

“We get to familiarize ourselves with a setup that we don’t work with while utilizing the [mortar vehicles],” said Spc. Shannon McEntyre, a gunner with C Company. “Before this intensive training we all knew our jobs, but now, we are learning others’ positions and working in different settings.” It’s an opportunity to hone perishable skills.

The training continues until after the sun sets, and small tritium lights are fixed to the candy-cane patterned red and white aiming stakes with which gunners align their sights. Calls of “Deflection!” and “Elevation!” echo throughout JSS Muthana’s perimeter well into the night.

Working on ground-mounted mortars is what is really going to makes

these Soldiers proficient,” said Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Eaken, a section sergeant with C Company and a Summerville, S.C., native. “With the training they’re receiving, they will go to their future units better prepared and more comfortable with these systems than their peers.”



*Spc. Jimmie McKoy, a mortar gunner with C Co., 1st Bn., 63rd Ar. Regt., 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C, traverses and levels a 120-mm mortar during a training exercise at Joint Security Station Muthana.*

Capt. Robert Noble, commander of B Company, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment officially hands over control of Camp Taqaddum to the 8th Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division May 16. Soldiers with B Company turned over the base to the Iraqi Ministry of Defense and transitioned to Camp Ramadi.



# Transitioning Forward

**More bases are returned to the Iraqi Army as the 4th AAB, 3rd Inf. Div. rotates out**

Story and Photos by

Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas, 4th AAB, 3rd Inf. Div.

Soldiers of the 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, have begun their departure home to Fort Stewart, Ga., and as their deployment comes to a close, so have three U.S. military installations they occupied during their year-long tour.

The base closures are part of the current plan to remove American forces from the country by the end of this year.

Members of the 28th Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division signed for Camp Khalid, May 8, and former U.S. tenants with D Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th AAB, 3rd Inf. Div. departed and joined the rest of their team at Al Asad Air Base.

On May 12, 80 Soldiers with C Company, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th AAB, 3rd Inf. Div. rolled out of Camp Tariq, after the 2nd Brigade, 1st IA Div., Quick Reaction Force signed for the compound.

U.S. Soldiers who've spent the

past 11 months at the small outpost say its closure was bittersweet.

"We've built this place up since we arrived here," said Staff Sgt. Nacoma Williamson, a squad leader with C Co., explaining that his Soldiers constructed fighting positions, a gym, an entry control point, a stage, and set up defensive barriers upon their arrival in July 2010. "But we also came here to help (the Iraqi Army), and I feel that we've successfully done that."

Williamson and Staff Sgt. Jonathan Mrnak said that during its deployment C Co., was tasked with teaching basic soldier skills to Iraqi Army members.

"We brought them to the range, showed them how to shoot, taught them things like ambush techniques, patrols, team movement, security and vehicle searches – on a weekly basis," said Mrnak.

"They (now) understand check-point (operations). They know how to zero their weapons, among other things. It seems like they've learned a lot from us. They put

their own spin on things, but they are ready to do this job on their own."

Williamson, who deployed to the Al Anbar province during the Iraq Invasion in 2003, said that much has changed over the past eight years and that base handovers, like Camp Tariq, are noted successes for the both the U.S. and the Government of Iraq.

"Think about how awesome it is to change an entire country," he said. "I know America wants us to come back home, but we're here to help make a change for this country, and now, we can say we have."

The C Co. Soldiers moved to Camp Fallujah, where they will finish out the remainder of their deployment.

Soldiers from B Company, 3rd Bn., 15th Inf. Regt. transferred Camp Taqaddum May 16 to Iraqi Army Soldiers of the 8th Brigade, 1st IA Div.

"This is all part of the future of re-posturing in Iraq," said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Shoemaker, commander of

3rd Bn, 15th Inf. Regt., who was on hand to witness the milestone at Taquaddum. "But, we're not saying good bye. This is not the end of our partnership or our friendship (with the IA)."

Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Barnes, the battalion sergeant major of 3rd Bn., 15th Inf. Regt., told his Soldiers they have contributed to their nation's history and helped with the development of Iraq.

"This is all because of your hard work and efforts," he said. "You can all be proud."



Capt. Daniel Evans looks on as an Iraqi Army leader with the 2nd Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division Quick Reaction Force signs for Camp Tariq, Iraq, May 12. Soldiers from 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, recently turned control of several bases back over to the Iraqi government.

# 1st IFP trains on range ops

Story by 1st Lt. Donald Gillilan,  
2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.

Senior noncommissioned officers with the 1st 'First Lightning' Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center have long sought to strengthen the battalion's partnership with the 1st Iraqi Federal Police Division, and in so doing, they recently shifted the discussion from the conference rooms and onto the firing range.

Command Sgt. Maj. William F. Bauer, senior enlisted advisor of 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt. and a New York City native, extended the invitation for Iraqi Federal Police Command Sgt. Maj. Habib Haytar, command sergeant major with the 1st IFP Div., to spend the day at the Joint Security Station Loyalty range learning and firing weapon

systems used by U.S. forces.

"[It is] good to be able to show Iraqi NCOs our weapon systems and the proficiency of our NCO training skills and abilities," said Bauer. "The main goal today was not to showcase our weapon systems, but put our NCOs in the forefront of partnership training, and for the Iraqis to witness for themselves the professionalism that comes with being a noncommissioned officer."

Sgt. 1st Class Clay Rose, a platoon sergeant with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt. was given the responsibility to provide instruction to the Iraqis. Rose covered everything from range safety to the intricate details of each weapon system—from the M240B machine gun to the ubiquitous M4 carbine.

"The instruction went well, and I think the Iraqis got something out of it," said Rose. "I do hope what they did get out of it was the safety considerations we take when training with our weapon systems, and that they take this back with them and train their peers and subordinates."

There were six firing stations set up, with a First Lightning NCO at each station ready to provide instructions to the firers. The first weapon system fired was the M240B, and the Iraqis were impressed by the power and precision of the weapon. Command Sgt. Maj. Alla' Muhammed, with the 1st IFP Div., attained top marks when he noticed that he hit ten out of ten shots in the middle of the target silhouette.

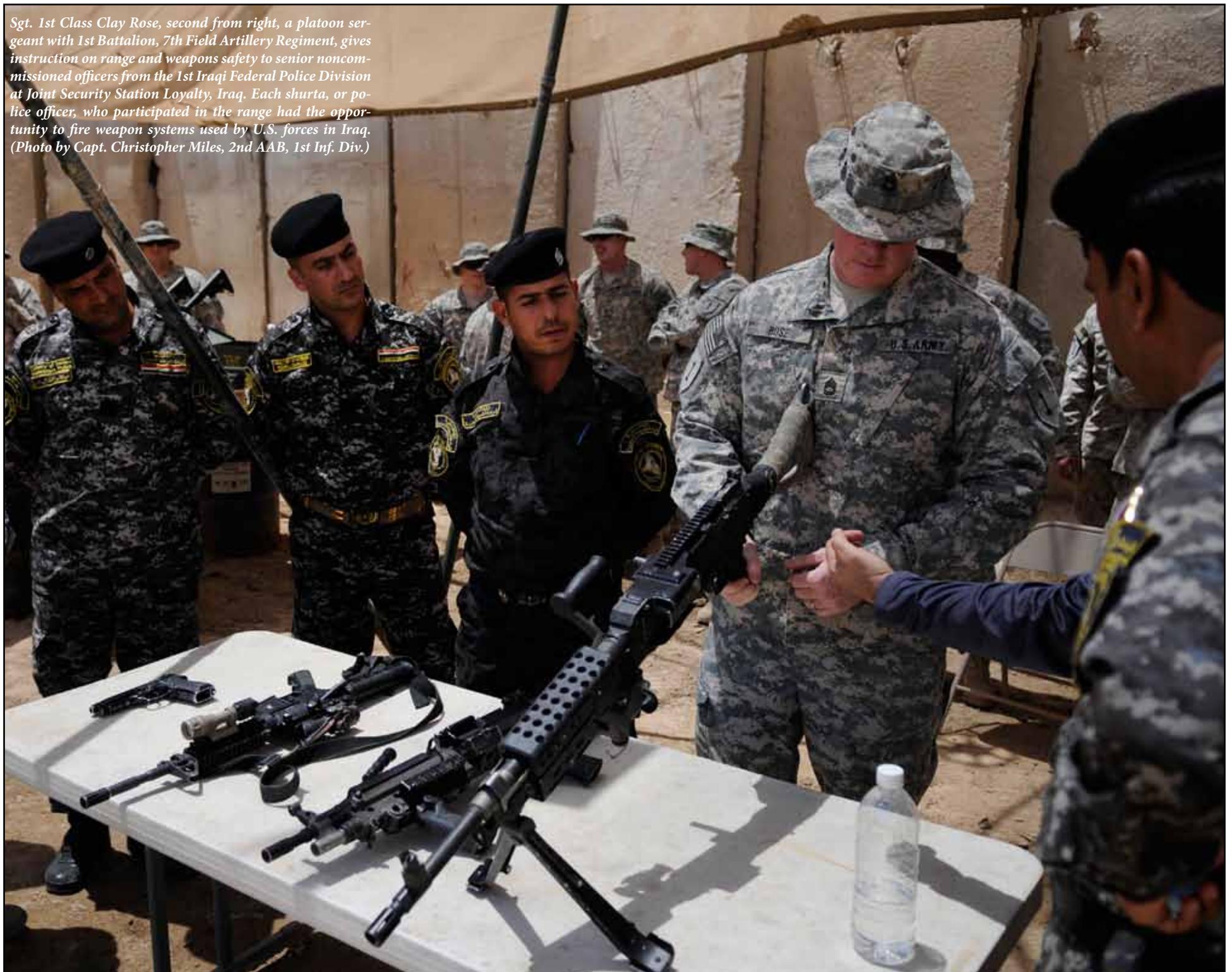
"[Muhammed] was a great shot,

and this was his first time using this type of weapon," said Staff Sgt. Tarquin Brown, a section chief with 1st Platoon, Battery A, 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt. and a Pensacola, Fla., native. "It was more difficult than I thought to train using an interpreter. I have seen others conduct this type of training, and I never thought anything about it, but now I believe this experience is great for NCO professional development."

When the range was completed, both parties began the walk back to a conference room, where they sat down to a lunch filled with American and Iraqi delicacies.

"This was a great day," Bauer said. "We were able to get a little training in and some lunch with great food, but now it's back to business for me and Command Sgt. Maj. Habib."

*Sgt. 1st Class Clay Rose, second from right, a platoon sergeant with 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, gives instruction on range and weapons safety to senior noncommissioned officers from the 1st Iraqi Federal Police Division at Joint Security Station Loyalty, Iraq. Each shurta, or police officer, who participated in the range had the opportunity to fire weapon systems used by U.S. forces in Iraq. (Photo by Capt. Christopher Miles, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)*





As Iraqi Federal Police officers and sheiks from the Radwaniyah Sheik Council look on, farmers from the Radwaniyah area adjust part of a water pump used to move water from the main irrigation canals in the area to individual fields.

# Moving Water

## Sheik council, 'Saber' Sqdn. bring irrigation pumps for farmers, Better irrigation means greater crops, sustainable future

Story and Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy, 29th MPAD

Soldiers from 6th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division-Center have been working with the 4th Iraqi Federal Police Division and the Radwaniyah Sheik Council to make positive changes in the Radwaniyah area of Iraq.

As part of that, farmers in the area recently received water pumps to provide better irrigation for their fields.

"There are 10 water pumps that have been purchased through a grant program," said Lt. Col. Cameron Cantlon, commander of 6th Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt. "These pumps were provided by the sheiks to the local farmers to provide the ability to move water from the main canals to the local fields."

Better irrigation equals greater crop yields, which in turn translates to a sustainable future for the area.

"The more prosperous people are in Radwaniyah, the better the security, the better the people are going to be, the better schools are going to be and the better the overall quality of life is going to be," said Cantlon. "It's the future of Iraq."

And while the Soldiers from the cavalry played a part in coordination for the water pumps, it was their Iraqi partners in the 4th IFP Div. and the sheik council that took the lead with the project.

"The significance is that the coordination was done by the 4th (Iraqi) Federal Police Division in support of this sheik council, said Cantlon. "The real importance is the sheiks and the local government providing a means necessary to the farmers to grow crops. In this instance there are main canals throughout Radwaniyah, but the ability to move water from the main canals to the fields is critical for the farmers, so these 10 water pumps are going to help a lot."

The importance of the sheik council itself goes beyond the water pumps, said Cantlon.

"The people living in Radwaniyah have a voice and the voice is their sheik, said Cantlon. "If they have a problem or an issue inside of their community, or

outside the community, they provide that to the sheik. The sheik brings it to this council meeting and highlights the issue, summarizes it, the council discusses it and solves the problem."

Though Cantlon and Soldiers from his unit are present at the meetings, they are there in strictly an advisory sense.

"Really (our involvement in) the sheik council, is to stand back and offer any support we can to the sheiks," said Cantlon. "We do not get involved in the actual sheik council, that's the sheiks solving problems, not American forces."

Cantlon added that far more often it is the local Iraqi government that is providing assistance.

"The sheiks are always supportive of anything that the American forces can provide to them, but something that we reinforce is that we only supplement," said Cantlon. "We augment the ability of the Iraqi government to provide for the Iraqi people. In fact, the Iraqi government provides much more than we do."

One example of recent improvements to the area is repaving roads that run throughout the area, said Cantlon.

"The road we drove in on today, that's a newly paved road all done by the Iraqi government," he said.

And for Cantlon, that ties into the most rewarding part for him of working with the local sheik council.

"My favourite part is watching the improvements in local governance," he said. "The improvements in a self-reliant government that supports the people, hears the voices of the people and in cooperation with the people improves the security and the quality of life for the people of Radwaniyah."

Being present to watch that, and work with the 4th IFP Div., is an honor, said Cantlon.

"They do a phenomenal job," he said. "They're brave warriors and they're learning everyday. We do everything we can to assist them with training and advising. It's a privilege to work with them."

Lt. Col. Cameron Cantlon, commander of 6th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division-Center, listens to the discussion while attending a meeting of the Radwaniyah Sheik Council in Radwaniyah, May 18. The meeting allows sheiks from the area to collectively find solutions to issues facing their communities.



Members of the 4th Iraqi Federal Police Division, the Radwaniyah Sheik Council and Soldiers with United States Division-Center look on as water is pumped from a main irrigation canal into a farm field in Radwaniyah May 18. The pumps, distributed to the farmers by the sheik council, were part of an improvement project undertaken by the 4th IFP Div. and USD-C's 6th Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt.

# Like father, like son...and daughter

## For one Camp Taji unit, flying is a family affair

Story by 1st Lt. Jason Sweeney  
40th CAB, USD-C

For many people, having an AH-64 Apache attack helicopter pilot for your dad is pretty cool. But for one Apache pilot, it's even cooler having two of your children follow in your footsteps to become pilots, too. "Without a doubt, I'm the proudest man on earth," said Capt. Dennis McNamara, an AH-64 Apache Longbow attack helicopter pilot for the 8th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 229th Aviation Regiment, an Army Reserve unit based out of Fort Knox, Ky.

McNamara is currently stationed at Camp Taji, Iraq, where he flies Apaches alongside his daughter, Capt. Elizabeth McNamara, 28, and his son, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brendon McNamara, 24.

The elder McNamara served 12 years in the active-duty Army before taking a full-time position at Fort Knox with the unit. After 11 years there, he moved to California to take a job with the Boeing Corporation, while switching over to a Reserve unit based out of Los Alamitos, Calif.

Dennis was at home in Helendale, Calif., when he learned that his son and daughter were deploying to Iraq with his old unit.

"I couldn't see both my children deploying and leaving me at home," he said. He called the unit's commander, Lt. Col. James Posey, and asked to re-join the unit for the deployment.

"Dennis McNamara and I have worked together for several years, so I considered it an honor to have his children serving in my command, and I welcomed his return to the unit," Posey said. "When the chance presented itself for him to deploy with us, I was a little concerned with having over half the family in my unit, in a combat zone, and all flying the same aircraft. We quickly decided they could not fly together while here, but at least they could all serve in the same area together."

Dennis McNamara has been flying Apaches for more than 20 years now. He served in Operation Desert Storm and in Operation Iraqi Freedom. But for his two kids, this deployment was their first.

Elizabeth and Brendon, who both call Louisville, Ky., home, said having their father with them has its advantages, giving them an extra "support element" while here.

Elizabeth is a platoon leader in the battalion and said her father knows a thing or two about leadership. Dennis had been a warrant officer in the unit when he was made a company commander due to a vacancy. He did such a good job of it that at age 44 he was offered a direct commission and became a second lieutenant at the same time Elizabeth was completing ROTC at the University of Kentucky.

With Elizabeth now in a command position, her father offers her advice and gives her critiques on her leadership style. They often talk while eating together at the dining facility or while hanging out when off duty.

Brendon, as a warrant officer, is a technical expert on flying, and he and his father often discuss tactics. With his father serving as an instructor pilot for the unit, talking about flying comes with the territory. Their containerized housing units are close to each other and they often hit the gym together, so despite being on different schedules, there are plenty of chances for Brendon



Pilots with the 8th ARB, 229th Avn. Regt., taxi out from the ramp area at Camp Taji in an AH-64 Apache helicopter. (Photo by Spc. Matthew Wright, 40th CAB, USD-C)



Chief Warrant Officer Brendon McNamara, left, Capt. Dennis McNamara and Capt. Elizabeth McNamara are all AH-64 Apache helicopter pilots deployed to Camp Taji, with the 8th Attack Recon Bn., 229th Avn. Regt. Dennis is the proud father of Brendon and Elizabeth. (Photo by Spc. Matthew Wright, 40th CAB, USD-C)

to talk to Dad, not to mention salute him, and his big sister, too.

Dennis said his children were "Army brats" who spent much of their childhoods around airfields, aircraft and helicopter pilots.

"Elizabeth, at four years old, told me that she would fly Apaches when she grew up," he said. "At the time, women weren't allowed to fly Apaches, so I encouraged her but didn't really think that would happen. Most four year olds don't pick their career. But she stuck with it and here we are."

Elizabeth said some of her earliest memories are of Apaches and the pilots who fly them.

"I remember going out to the airfield, guys playing volleyball, watching the parties at the gazebos. I knew for a long time that I was going to join the Army, but the one thing I wanted to do with it was fly attack helicopters. If we were going to go to combat, I wanted to be the one in the sky with the gun."

Brendon, on the other hand, didn't know until his late teens that the Army was for him. Shortly after graduating from high school, he sat down with his father and they discussed his future. After some fatherly advice, Brendon decided to enlist in the Army Reserves, and became an Apache crew chief. He did that for a few years before he submitted a flight packet and was accepted into flight school. He completed flight training in September, just in time to make it onto the deployment to Iraq.

What does he like about flying the Apache?

"It's nice having big guns in the sky," he said.

Brendon McNamara was born at Fort Rucker, the home of Army aviation, so in a sense he was born to fly. As for Elizabeth, not only is she a pilot from a family of pilots, she married a pilot as well.

"My dad always told me to stay away from Apache pilots," she said. But she didn't listen to that bit of advice and married Capt. Brian Schlesier, who is currently flying Apaches in Afghanistan.

Elizabeth said she doesn't think it's that big of a deal to be deployed with family members.

"The 8-229 is like a big family, anyway," she said.

All three said the real story about their deployment is wife and mom Cindy back home.

"My wife's the one who has all the stress," Dennis said. "We have the fun of flying. I tease her all the time because she used to complain that I would deploy and leave her with all the kids. So now I say I took the kids with me."

For Dad, nearing the end of his Army career and getting the chance to deploy with his children, he said it's been a great privilege.

"I can't stop being a father, but I try to be a mentor and give advice," Dennis said. "But sometimes as a father, you have to step back and it's hard. I'm definitely honored that they followed me into this so I'm conscious of always trying to set the right example. I have tremendous faith in both of them. They are very good at what they do. They are very professional and they get the job done."

Posey agreed.

"They are top notch Soldiers," he said. "Runs in the family."



# U.S. Division Our A

## History in the Making

This month we celebrate the 236th birthday of our Army. For more than two centuries, America's Soldiers have defended our country and the ideals of freedom throughout the world. We share a strong bond with those first Soldiers of the Continental Army. Just as they were in the midst of war in 1775, so are Soldiers today as we support Operation New Dawn and Operation Enduring Freedom.

The formation of the Continental Army occurred when our Nation was in struggle to exist. Oppression gripped the Thirteen Colonies in the New World, which only served to strengthen the resolve of colonists to fight for their liberty. In 1775 the American Revolution began and, with it, the foundations of our Army were set. Against the odds, those who manned the militia and Continental Army fought and won independence for the United States of America. Ever since the first war to protect our freedom, the U.S. Army stood as defender of our rights and guardian of our Nation.

Today we are in the midst of a war to preserve freedom, as it was when our Army was born. The ethos that strengthened our brethren who fought at the dawn of our Nation is the same today as we help Iraq into the light of a new dawn. We stand our ground, strengthened by those who came before us, to defend freedom and liberty.



American Revolution



World War I



World War II



Korean War



Vietnam War

# on - Center Celebrates Army Birthday



## Honoring the Army History

U.S. Division - Center units celebrated the U.S. Army's 236th Birthday beginning with a 4.4 mile formation run around Victory Base Complex led by U.S. Forces -Iraq and USD-C leaders. Units participating in the run included USF-I, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team, and Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion.

Following the run, a cake-cutting ceremony was held at USD-C headquarters. Youngest USD-C Soldier Pfc. Jason Saxton, 18, and eldest Soldier Chaplain (Lt. Col.) David Tish, 59, both with 116th CBCT (Garrison Command), joined USD-C leaders Brig. Gen. Paul LaCamera, deputy commanding general - operations, and Command Sgt. Maj. Ray Devens, command sergeant major, in the cake cutting.

Find more photos at [www.25idl.army.mil](http://www.25idl.army.mil)



# Dad MAKES M

In honor of Father's Day, dads serving in U



**SPC. Jonathan Hopper**

HHC, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.

**hisTEACHING**

Words would fail to express the gratitude I have in my heart for my Father. There has been no man I have ever met which has taught me more about what it means to be a man than my Dad. From the art of hunting and fishing, to learning to work diligently with my hands, my Father has been my greatest role model in life. Thank you Dad, for making me strong!

**STAFF SGT. Daniel ORR**

Sig. Co., HHBN, 25th Inf. Div.

**hisPATIENCE**

My Father has made me strong. I owe everything I am to my Father in Heaven. He is my Creator and will always love and support me. He provided me with a family where I was able to be taught and loved by my parents. My father is a kind, patient, God-fearing man who has always been a hard worker and slow to anger. He served in the Marine Corps and inspired me to want to serve my country, to make him proud. I am blessed to have a loving wife and four children that look to me for guidance. I love and desire only the best for them and will strive to lead them as I have been led.



# ME STRONG

USD-C, and the fathers of USD-C troops.

**CAPT. Julie Leggett**

HSC, HHBN, 25TH INF. DIV.

**hisVALUES**

My Dad makes me strong. He is a man of deep faith and solid values. He always does what is right and continuously goes out of his way to help anyone in need. He is the hardest-working person I know. His selflessness and diligence inspire me. Growing up he was constantly working, either in his job as a technician or tending to the family farm. He is a true patriot. He served in the Navy for four years during Vietnam and the day he (got out) he went over to our hometown American Legion to become a regular volunteer. Through his life, I have come to understand what it means to live with honor.



**CAPT. Charmaine Douse**

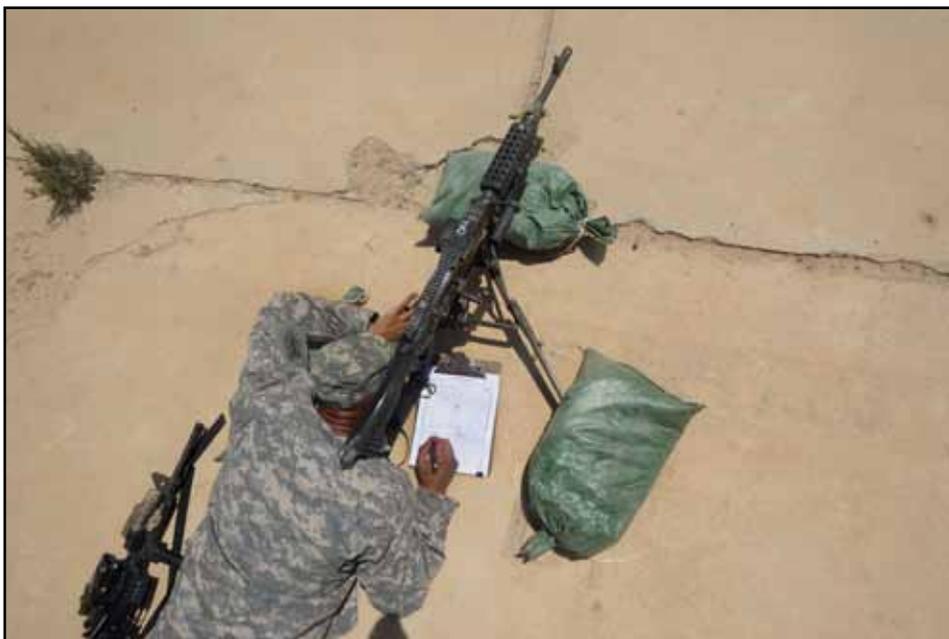
G-8, 25th Inf. Div.

**hisEXAMPLE**

My husband is an outstanding father. He ensures that our son is provided for and has a positive role model to emulate.

# 'Vanguard' Bn. Soldiers vie for Ranger School slots and the chance to show once again that

*Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division-Center, makes their way along the course of a 12-mile ruck march as part of a unit competition at Camp Taji for the opportunity to attend Ranger School.*



*(ABOVE) Sgt. Luther Williams, with Company A, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt., sketches out a range card detailing his sector of fire as part of a unit competition at Camp Taji for the opportunity to attend Ranger School.*

*(LEFT) Sgt. Corey Hessler, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, assembles an M4 Carbine as part of a the competition. The 22 Soldiers who took part in the competition were tested both physically and mentally throughout the competition, just as they would be in Ranger School.*



Story and Photos by  
Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy, 29th MPAD

**T**here were 22 who showed up for the competition, but only 10 who would go on to the next level. For some, this was the difficult part, for others, it was something they could do in their sleep. But for all, it was something they had trained long and hard for.

The 22 Soldiers taking part—all from the 1st "Vanguard" Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center—were competing to earn one of the battalion's ten slots for Ranger School.

Held recently at Camp Taji, Iraq, the competition featured a Ranger physical training test—which included a five-mile run and pull-ups in addition to push-ups and sit-ups—a 12-mile ruck march, the Combat Water Survival Test and testing on numerous basic Soldier and infantry skills, such as map reading and weapons tasks.

The competition was designed to emphasize some of the physical and mental demands those going through

Ranger School face.

"When you get to Ranger School, you're going to have the Ranger PT test like we had this morning," said Sgt. Corey Hessler, an infantryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt. "You're going to have the swim test. There may be different variations from what we completed this morning, but (this is) going to prepare you."

And for those taking part, preparing for the competition started months ago.

"About three months ago the (battalion) sergeant major came up with a plan for us to get selected to go to Ranger School," said Hessler. "So, for the past three months we've been training up, getting ready and today is finally the day for the Ranger School selection process."

The selection process only begins with the battalion competition. Those ten that make the cut will then first go to the Pre-Ranger Course held at the Warrior Training Center at Fort Benning, Ga., and after completing that course they will then move on to Ranger School.

# Rangers lead the Way!

Many who competed said they know that both the Pre-Ranger and Ranger Courses are rigorous and challenging, but they had prepared themselves to meet those physical and mental challenges.

“Mentally, I just tell myself that I know it’s going to be bad, but I have to wake up every morning—if I do get to go to sleep—and just keep driving on and fighting through to the Ranger objective and never quit,” said Hessler. “That’s all I can do.”

But for now, the first challenge was to get through the battalion selection process, which many discovered wasn’t going to be easy.

“The hardest part so far was the swim test,” said Staff Sgt. Nathan

Haag, a targeting noncommissioned officer with HHC, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt. “Swimming with the rifle, I think a lot of guys took it for granted how easy or difficult it could be, and it tended to be quite difficult swimming in the uniform.”

For those to be successful, it comes down to having the mental fortitude to push through, said competitors.

“I think it has to do with (having) a lot of heart,” said Haag. “The kids that have the most and, obviously, put forth the effort, is what’s going to show through today.”

And for many in the competition, earning the tab was a long-standing goal.

“I’ve been looking forward to this since I joined the Army,” said Haag. “Earning a Ranger Tab was always a goal of mine. With the deployments, it’s always been hard to get (a slot in the school).”

And for others it comes down to simply wanting to be among the best.

“This is very important to me,” said Hessler. “It shows that you’re one of the best. I just want to be the best, so I want the Ranger Tab.”



(ABOVE) Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, take part in the Combat Water Skills Test at Camp Taji.



Soldiers vying for one of 10 Ranger School slots stretch out prior to the 12-mile ruck march.



(LEFT) Spc. Dymytro Seryodkin, right, an infantryman with C Company, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt., knocks out push-ups as Sgt. 1st Class Philemon Jones, first sergeant with D Company, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt., counts the repetitions during a unit competition for the chance to attend Ranger School.



Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, start out on a five-mile run as part of a unit competition at Camp Taji for the opportunity to attend Ranger School. The competition included the run as well as a 12-mile ruck march and testing on weapons tasks, map reading and other tactical skills and was designed to give the prospective Ranger candidates a small taste of the physical and mental requirements of Ranger School.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jeffrey Hilliard, chief armament technician with Company B, 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center, checks the condition of a 120 mm mortar tube at Camp Liberty, Iraq. With an upcoming live fire exercise, it is crucial that Soldiers involved ensure the mortars remain serviceable. (Photo by 1st Lt. Jennifer Shelton, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)



# USD-C at a glance



(LEFT) Col. Lou Lartigue, commander of the 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, awards Sgt. Robert Sacco, with B Company, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th AAB, the Army Commendation Medal with Valor during a ceremony at Camp Ramadi, May 27.

(BELOW) Lt. Col. Dale Farrand, commander of 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center, pins the Combat Action Badge on Sgt. Joshua Welch, a Soldier with the 299th BSB's convoy security detachment May 14 at Camp Liberty, Iraq.





(ABOVE) Pfc. Abel Ochoa, a cavalry scout with A Troop, 6th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center disassembles an M2 .50 caliber heavy machine gun during training for a weapon systems qualifications test at Camp Liberty. The test is one of many during the selection process for the Excellence in Armor program which seeks to identify outstanding Soldiers whose performance demonstrates superb leadership potential. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Daniel Elmblad, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)



(RIGHT) Lt. Col John Cross, right, commander of 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center, passes the company guidon to Capt. Stephen Harper, incoming commander of C Company, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C during a Change of Command ceremony at Camp Taji, May 25. (Photo by Pfc. Robert J. Harvey, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)

# USD-C at a glance



Soldiers with the 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center rehearse security operations during a situational training exercise at Camp Liberty, Iraq. The purpose of the two-day training exercise, hosted by the combat logistics patrol security detachment, was to enhance the recovery, medical, and security skills needed for successful patrol operations. (Photo by Sgt. Norman Smith, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)

A Soldier with Troop A, 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division-Center, glances back at a local resident after speaking with him and offering his family a blanket near Combat Outpost Falcon. Members of the Iraqi Security Forces and U.S. forces have built strong relationships with many in the area, which has led to aid in tracking down insurgent activity.



# Building bridges, Making changes

## 5th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt. works with 4th IFP to make lasting progress

Story and photos by  
2nd Lt. Devin Osborne,  
2AAB, 1st Inf. Div.

Soldiers with the 5th “Longknife” Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center, recently partnered with members of the Iraqi Federal Police to patrol areas of Baghdad with the potential for terrorist activity.

These joint patrols have become a major focus of the Longknife Squadron’s mission.

Working with the IFP, Longknife Soldiers have provided increased security in a number of neighborhoods in Baghdad, including the area around Baghdad International Airport.

These joint security measures have shown to be effective in deterring violence.

“Since the beginning of security patrols around BIAP, we have seen a decrease in enemy activity,” said 1st Lt. Michael Sprigg, a troop intelligence support team officer with 5th Squadron and a Norton, Kan.,

native. “This is largely due to the ISF (Iraqi Security Forces) presence and joint patrols in the Radwanayah area.”

During these missions with Iraqi police members, Longknife Soldiers also try to gain information that could be used to help prevent future violence.

“Since the patrols began, the Iraqi Federal Police and United States forces have found a significant amount of weaponry, which helps them identify where the attacks are originating,” said Sprigg.

As the expected drawdown of U.S. forces from Iraq approaches, members of local ISF such as the 2nd Iraqi Federal Police Division are preparing for when they will need to continue this mission without the presence of U.S. troops.

With the knowledge gained from training while working alongside 5th Squadron Soldiers, many Iraqi police feel ready to do their part.

“It is our job to protect the people of our country, and we will bring those to justice that want to cause them harm,” said Sgt. Haidar with the 2nd IFP Division.



First Lt. Erik Rekedal, a platoon leader with A Troop, 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, guides Soldiers in a Humvee along a congested road while on a reconnaissance mission in Iraq.



# USD-C PHYSICAL FITNESS FORUM (PFF)

[www.25idl.army.mil/fitness](http://www.25idl.army.mil/fitness)

## Lightning Strong

Fitness is the foundation for everything we do. Mental and physical toughness are keys to success in life, both on and off the battlefield. We are trying to change not only how we think about it, but how we train.

We recently launched the Tropic Lightning Physical Fitness Forum on the Division web page to help discuss physical training, equipment, and share new techniques with ALL Soldiers.

We invite you to learn more at [www.25idl.army.mil/fitness](http://www.25idl.army.mil/fitness)

## WARRIOR ATHLETES

While serving in a combat zone a Soldier, Officer, NCO may be required to take on unfamiliar and unexpected roles to accomplish the unit mission. Because of this, a high level of resiliency is required for these Warriors to be ready for any mission or enemy - expected or unexpected.



### FUNCTIONAL FITNESS

Strength  
Endurance  
Movement Skill

### SPORTS MEDICINE

Prevention  
Early intervention  
Multi-disciplinary team

### PERFORMANCE NUTRITION

Nutrient Needs  
Ideal body composition  
Supplements

### MENTAL TOUGHNESS

Ideal performance state  
Fatigue counter-measures  
Endurance events

## BUILDING THE SOLDIER ATHLETE

# Myth Busters

### FITNESS MAINTENENCE

#### MYTH

*When on a deployment we can't exercise as often or for as long. It's best to forego exercise and pick up where we left off when we return home.*

#### FACT

You can maintain your performance level for up to 90 days as long as you maintain your previous level of intensity. If you must limit your exercise program for three months, it is best to exercise for 15-20 minutes one to two times a week. The key to maintaining your level of fitness is to maintain your level of intensity.



## MENTAL & PHYSICAL STRENGTH BUILDING PHILOSOPHY



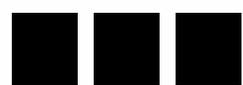
- The Individual Warrior (Officer/NCO/Soldier) is our most lethal weapon.
- You don't know how tough your enemy will be. Assume they will be very challenging.
- You don't know the exact physical requirements needed on your next mission. Assume it will be extremely demanding mentally and physically.
- All Army missions require strength, endurance, and movement skills... Excelling in only one or two leaves you vulnerable to poor performance.
- Training hard physically is not enough; you have to train your mental strength to be quick and adaptive as well.
- The mental capacity or physical abilities of each of your team members will assess your mission capability. Strengthen your weak links.
- Form matters. Master the exercise and techniques and demand proper execution from Soldiers.
- The body adapts to the stress you place upon it. This takes time. Cells aren't necessarily on the same schedule as your head and heart. Be consistent, patient, and think of improvement over weeks and months, not days.
- Don't exhaust yourself everyday. Respect the need for recovery.
- Guidance builds in some degree of recovery but leaders must be attuned to their Soldiers and modify the training stress appropriately.
- Fuel the machine. Don't train your mind and body and blow it with a lousy diet. Leaders need to have a plan for Soldiers' proper hydration, meals, snacks and stick to it.
- Take care of your injuries before they become chronic. "Soldiering on" is necessary on occasion but doing it for too long may lead to an injury which can't be fixed.
- Maintain your mental strength always. Historically, Warriors have been defined more by their minds than their bodies. Similarly, most athletes claim their performances are as much mental as physical, yet they seldom train or have a plan to develop mental strength.
- Soldiers need to recognize their ideal performance state and be able to call upon it at a moment's notice.
- Leaders must learn all they can about the mind, body, nutrition, and exercise, then apply that to the task at hand... Making you and your Soldiers the best Warrior athletes they can be.

#### Bottom Line:

**Develop your Warrior mind right, train your Warrior body right, eat right, sleep right, and stand ready for any combat mission at any time and any where that our Nation needs you to serve.**

*Information provided in this segment is gathered from the 25th Infantry Division's Athlete Warrior Philosophy. For detailed information on these facts check the guide at [www.25idl.army.mil/fitness](http://www.25idl.army.mil/fitness).*

# For Dad ...



**Happy Father's Day to all the fathers of USD-C and the fathers of those who have children serving as part of USD-C.**

