



Task Force Danger

October 4, 2004

# *BRO Progress*

*1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division*

## A bridge to prosperity

TIKRIT, Iraq -- More than a year after it was destroyed by Multinational forces, American and Iraqi officials re-opened the Tikrit Bridge during a ribbon-cutting ceremony Wednesday morning.

The cities of Tikrit and Kirkuk will once again be linked and they stand to benefit financially from the bridge, said James Stephenson, mission director of U.S. Agency for International Development. His organization was tasked with repairing the Tikrit Bridge and three others in Iraq.

"Tikrit and Kirkuk are historic cities,

and this bridge rejoins the two," Stephenson said. "Most importantly, it rejoins the people and opens the way for commerce."

COL Randal Dragon of the 1st Infantry Division echoed similar sentiments. He said the bridge will allow the citizens of the Salah Ad Din province to prosper for decades to come.

"It was determination, will power and energy that got us to this day, and it will be determination and will power that will move this country forward," he said.

The 1st ID provided security and other services while workers repaired the

bridge.

The Tikrit Bridge, which stretches over the Tigris River, was bombed by Multinational forces shortly after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq began in March 2003. Soon after that, it was on the verge of collapsing and two partial spans later fell into the river, according to USAID.

In August 2003 USAID hired Bechtel National Inc., which subcontracted with 77 Construction Company, an Iraqi firm, to repair the bridge. The project cost about \$5.4 million, Stephenson said.



# Iraqi youth plays America's favorite pastime

ALTUN KUPRI, Iraq – Minus the sound of Muslim prayer on a loud speaker from a nearby mosque, the Iraqi baseball game played here on Sept. 15 was reminiscent of a Little League game back in the states.

More than 20 Iraqi youth, dressed in complete baseball uniforms, made history when they played in the five-inning baseball game. Because there are no previous records of an official baseball game played during or after Saddam Hussein's regime, the Altun Kupri youth played the country's first one in decades.

"Outlaw" Soldiers of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 11th Field Artillery Regiment organized the game for the Iraqi youth. All of the coaches and umpires were Outlaws, and interpreters helped guide the youth in the game.

Throughout the game, there were visual signs that Iraq was still a soccer-dominated country as some of the fielders stopped ground balls with their feet instead of gloves.

But in the end, laughter and smiles prevailed from this American game as the Newroz team beat the Brusik team, 10-7.



# Dentist, 1ID team up to help schoolchildren

FOB DANGER, Tikrit, Iraq – LTC John Elliott is a periodontist who normally plies his trade in private practice in sunny Corona, California. But he is also a reservist attached to the 380th Medical Company, Dental Section out of Memphis, Tennessee who volunteered to practice for 90 days in Tikrit, Iraq.

He has been working on the mouths, teeth and gums of American and Iraqi Soldiers here on Forward Operating Base Danger since August. In addition to volunteering his time for the military, he has another mission that makes his journey here that much more special.

On September 5th, Elliott, in conjunction with the 415th Civil Affairs Battalion visited the Al-Har Al-Thani School in northern Tikrit to conduct an oral hygiene teach-in with the students there. Elliott's desire to help the local communities fit perfectly with the goals of the 415th.

"LTC Elliott really fills a

gap for the 415th," said CPT Donna Kentley, a physician's assistant with the 415th.

"Dentistry and oral hygiene are widely ignored in this country, and he helps us out by providing a way for us to reach out to the communities and express how important

this is, for the kids, especially, which is why I am so glad to go to these schools."

To provide privacy, the two care providers use separate classrooms while they work with individual children one on one for about five minutes at a time.

Elliott uses tongue depressors and the children say "Aah" while he examines them for any serious problems. He then gives them each toothbrushes and toothpaste and sends them to CPT Kentley, who examines their eyes, throats, and spines.

