



DRAGON FIRE

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October 2007

Riders on the Storm



MONTANEZ

For the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

1st
Security
retiree
Southwest
Montanez
guarding Brig.
the Multinational
Assistant
for Support, and
oper, the chief
for Multinational
battlefield circula-
11, code: 4th IBC T)

Remembering Wounded Comrades

Dragon Soldiers, families and friends- it is my distinct pleasure to bring you another edition of DRAGON FIRE magazine, chronicling the efforts and tremendous successes of the brigade during our time in Baghdad.

This fifth issue of our publication is a special one; I recently had the honor and privilege to visit our wounded Dragons at Brooks Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and San Antonio. It was great to be able to see the troops and how they are in good spirits as they heal and prepare to enter the next phases in their respective recoveries.

I also went to the Pentagon for a ceremony honoring Lt. Col. Gregory Gadson, "Patriot 6" and former commander of the Proud Americans, who was seriously injured in a roadside bomb attack in Southern Baghdad a few months earlier. He had quite a turnout, and I have to say that it was one of the highlights of my career to pin the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and Meritorious Service medals on his chest for his service to a grateful nation in front of his family, friends and leaders at the Army's highest levels.

What is even more humbling is that Greg Gadson and many other Dragon Soldiers who have left the fight due to combat wounds are not broken in spirit by any means, and will continue to serve in this great Army as we continue the Global War on Terror. These



Col. Ricky Gibbs

ing a positive difference each day, and I can't say enough about how we appreciate the work and sacrifices you are making.

Autumn has come to Baghdad, and while the days are not quite as hot, the brigade continues to work harder than ever. We've continued to maintain pressure on terrorists and criminals who threaten our security, and the Dragon Soldiers are doing amazing things to help build a better present and future for the citizens of the Rashid District.

Keep after it, and remember our division motto: No mission too difficult, No sacrifice too great...DUTY FIRST!

Col. Ricky D. Gibbs
Dragon 6

An Ode to the Hispanic Soldier

From Spanish allies during the American Revolution to "Puerto Riqueños" marching off to serve with distinction in the "Borinqueneers," the 65th Regimental Combat Team from Puerto Rico, during World War I, World War II, and Korea to Vietnam, and now the War on Terror, Latino Soldiers have served the U.S. proudly and with distinction. Currently, there are more than 85,000 Hispanic Americans on active duty.

It is no different within the Dragon Brigade; Hispanic Soldiers contribute to our mission success everyday. They embrace the American spirit and are zealous in their support of the democratic principles for which the United States stands.

Recently, as I was researching Hispanic heritage, I came across an interesting tradition called the "Corrido". It is a popular traditional Mexican genre, a story told in song. It is no surprise, then, that Mexican-American Soldiers marching off to war should have composed wartime corridos, immortalizing this very important time in their lives.

First Lt. David Pegueros of the 4th IBCT put to paper a corrido for the Soldiers of the Dragon Brigade.

A special thanks to 1st Lt. Pegueros for adding to the Dragon legacy, and to those Hispanic Americans warriors who have for served with distinction through each and every war and conflict entered by the U.S. and now in Baghdad, Iraq.

Dragon Soldiers
(Dragon Soldados)
Two thousand seven Baghdad, Iraq



Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Champagne and
1st Lt. David Pegueros

(Dos mil y siete, Baghdad, Iraq)
A distant land burnt by the sun
(Una tierra distante y quemado por el sol)
Rashid District still torn by war
(District Rashid todavia rasgada por guerra)
Surging for peace, safety and pride
(El aflojarse por la paz, la seguridad, y el orgullo)

First for some, others have come back
(El primero vez por algunos, Otros han regresado)

A new brigade, new to the gun
(Una brigada nueva, sin experiencia con las armas)
Dragon Soldiers will even the score
(Dragon Soldados tendra venganza)
Always ready where danger hides
(Siempre listo donde el peligro oculta)
Dust and diesel are just life's fact
(Polvo y diesel son hechos de la vida)
We wonder when we will be done
(Nosotros Pensamos cuando terminamos)
And some ask what we do this for
(Y algunos les piden porque lo hacemos)
Safe to semi, come on let's ride
(De seguro a semi, Adelantado montemos)

"Get After It!"

Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Champagne
Dragon 7



Spc. Kevin Hail, a dismount with Troop A, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Waco, Texas, watches a herd of goats surround him while on patrol in southern Baghdad's Rashid District, Sep. 26. (Smith/4th IBCT)

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On the cover

Spc. Daniel Montanez, a Bradley driver on the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division personal security detachment from New York, returning from a mission into the Southwest Rashid District, Sep. 27. Montanez and his platoon were guarding Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, the Multinational Division-Baghdad Assistant Division Commander for Support, and Maj. Gen. Peter Bergner, the chief of Strategic Effects for Multinational Forces-Iraq, on a battlefield circulation of the region. (Luedeke/4th IBCT)

COUGARS READY TO

Story, photos by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT Public Affairs

In 1836, the 2nd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment was activated to combat the Seminole Tribe in Florida.

The unit answered their nation's call to service and has done so ever since, earning the distinction of being the longest continuously active unit in the U.S. Army.

Today, the 'Cougars' of what is now known as the 2nd Squadron of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment have again uncased their colors in a combat zone, this time across the world under seemingly different circumstances.

Lt. Col. Myron Reineke, the commander of 2-2 SCR from Spring Valley, Minn., saw similarities between when the unit was initially activated and the conflict they find themselves in today.

"Then, as now, the early Dragoons were in a conflict where they could not necessarily see end-state," he said. "All they could do was fight, day after day and believe with certainty that the conflict would resolve itself.

"As history bears out, it did, and it will again here in Iraq."

Reineke, who took over the unit in March of 2006 when it was still the 3rd Battalion,



Lt. Col. Myron Reineke, commander of the 2nd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment from Spring Valley, Minn., and Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Wood, the senior noncommissioned officer of the 2-2 SCR from Dallas, unfurl the unit's colors in a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad, Sep. 16. The 'Cougars' are deployed out of Vilseck, Germany.

21st Infantry Regiment, has overseen a period of great transition for his Soldiers.

Since he has been the commander, the unit re-flagged to the 2nd SCR, changed

station from Fort Lewis, Wash., to Vilseck, Germany, and received orders to deploy just three months before doing so.

"There are many challenges associated

"All they could do was fight, and believe with certainty that the conflict would resolve itself. It did, and it will again here in Iraq."



HUNT IN BAGHDAD



with preparing for this type of deployment,” Reineke said.

“There’s limited time on the calendar to meet platoon, company and squadron training objectives. “Once the Soldiers are gone, we focused on the families, making sure they were ready to endure a long separation from their Soldiers. We have a first-class rear detachment in place for the regiment and squadron taking care of these families.”

With the Soldiers being able to focus on the task at hand, they will be able to carry their colors through Iraq for the third time, having done so already in Desert Storm and for Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003-2004.

The ‘Cougars’ of the 2-2 SCR are currently attached to the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division out of Fort Riley, Kan.

Bottom Left: From left, Spc. Hong Kim, a mortarman from Los Angeles, Spc. Casey O’Malley and Spc. Jeffery Beckham, both personnel actions clerks with HHC, 2-2 SCR from Tacoma, Wash., and Spc. Lawrence Harrell, a unit supply clerk from Winnsboro, La., all with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, serve as the color guard during their unit’s colors uncasing ceremony at FOB Falcon, Sept. 16. This is the third time the colors of 2-2 SCR have been uncased in Iraq; once in Operation Desert Storm and once during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Across Bottom: Company commanders of the 2nd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment salute during the playing of the national anthem at the ‘Cougars’ colors uncasing ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad, Sept. 16. The commanders knew they would be leading their troops into combat only three months prior to deploying. Left: Maj. Steve Soika, the executive officer of the 2nd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment from Brunswick, Ohio, bows his head in prayer before the uncasing of the unit’s colors in a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad, Sept. 16.



Phoenix feeding the

by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith

When most Soldiers on Forward Operating Base Falcon enter the "Dragon's Lair" Dining Facility on post, they may not understand the importance of why they must have proper identification to enter. They also may not understand the gravity of their job when they're tasked with guard duty at the dining hall or why the Soldiers working there take their jobs so seriously.

Sgt. Antonio Williams understands.

Williams, an assistant contracting officer technical representative at FOB Falcon's dining facility with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 610th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, and his Soldiers are responsible for ensuring health standards are maintained in the kitchen and all necessary force protection measures are taken.

The Wisner, La., native said Soldiers may think the dining facility staff's job is easy, but they should look again.

"It's more than what the eye can see; when you come in during mealtime, you see us walking around monitoring, doing regular force protection, and adjusting any issues customers may have," Williams said. "That's just on the outside. It's pretty demanding at times, but we manage."

In December of 2004, the Forward Operating Base Marez dining facility was



attacked, killing more than twenty and wounding almost 70.

The burden of preventing a similar attack at FOB Falcon falls squarely on the shoulders of the 'Phoenix' of 610th BSB.

Pfc. Lakrisha Kendrick said her fellow Soldiers help her when the weight of this responsibility gets to be more than she thinks she can bear.

"My NCO keeps me motivated, and if you need help, you can talk to him about anything, and my fellow section members also," she said. "You know there's always someone around to help you, and all you have to do is ask."

With the Soldiers operating the dining facility responsible for force protection, maintaining sanitary standards, a 24-hour takeout area, monitoring employees coming and going, and ensuring proper storage of food, the troops rely on each other a lot

to complete their mission for the sake of every resident of FOB Falcon.

In Williams' eyes, the Soldiers' most important task is maintaining their focus while monitoring all who enter the facility.

"Everything that you do, you have to pay attention to what you're doing. It could be that one time that you miss, the one time you're not paying attention to detail and that guy slips through and you don't check him properly, he may have something on him and something happens in the dining facility," Williams said. "Then you're going to look at it as 'that may have been the guy that I let through.' That's how you look at it as a big responsibility.

"Every little part might be so small, you may have got 50 right, but it could be that one guy on my watch that I let get through, that I did not check properly."

Dragons

Across: The Forward Operating Base Dining Facility, known as the 'Dragon's Lair,' provides a safe, clean and healthy place for Soldiers to eat, on the FOB and out at Coalition Outposts throughout the Rashid District. The facility is operated by Soldiers of the 610th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

Below: Soldiers of Forward Operating Base Falcon line up to get lunch at the 'Dragon's Lair' Dining Facility, Sept. 13. The 610th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division ensures the food is stored and prepared properly, as well as maintaining sanitary conditions throughout the facility.

Right: A Kellogg Browne and Root employee prepares dinner for the Soldiers of Forward Operating Base Falcon, Oct. 3. Part of the 610th Brigade Support Battalion's responsibilities is overwatching KBR workers.



Black Lions Resto

by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith

Photos courtesy of 1st Bn. 28th Infantry
4th IBCT Public Affairs

Citizens of Baghdad have been surrounded by images of the past since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq over four years ago, such as bombed out buildings and images of the regime under Saddam Hussein.

The Black Lions of the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, currently deployed to southern Baghdad out of Fort Riley, Kan., have set out to help instill a new sense of pride in the Iraqi people working toward a common goal.

The unit kicked off the West Rashid War Relics Initiatives in September, starting with a mural on a billboard that used to bear the visage of a brutal tyrant and replacing a symbol of destruction, the structurally unsound Saddam Department Store where members of the Baathist party would shop, with a symbol of life, a park that all the citizens of Rashid can enjoy.

Capt. Ralls Finch, the deputy operations officer of 1-28 Inf. from Charlotte, N.C., said the War Relics Initiative accomplished several objectives at once.

“One was employing the people of the local area in the community; two, bringing together and uniting the people of the community; three, making them feel safer and raising the morale in the community,” he said. “Showing the people that Northwest Rashid is going to be cleaned up and it’s going to be a success story without insurgents striking fear in their minds and having people afraid and staying in their homes.”

In addition to these goals, the project also helped the economy, providing over 170 jobs to residents of the Black Lions’ area of operations.

“We’re employing people in the community to cleanup their own community, which not only raises (spirits) but helps employ community members that would otherwise maybe be influenced by insurgents or terrorism,” Finch said.

The success of the West Rashid War Relics Initiative is an indicator of the success U.S. Soldiers are having in the area, Finch added.

“Before the 1-28 Inf. Black Lions arrived in Northwest Rashid, I don’t know if it’s possible



The Saddam Department Store in southern Baghdad where members of the ruling Baathist party would shop prior to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

that you could have had 20 guys out there painting a mural or 100 guys cleaning up along (Airport Road) because it was too dangerous,” Finch said. “The Soldiers doing kinetic operations down in the line platoons and companies have changed that aspect of the battlefield.”

“Obvious evidence of that is people can go out and clean up the roads, tear down damaged department stores, rebuild new ones, and cleanup the streets.”

A District Action Councilman attributed the successes in southern Baghdad to the Soldiers of 1-28 Inf.

“We appreciate the help and sacrifice of the U.S. forces. They were able to control terrorism and the citizens see this and recognize this; they will continue to rebuild the Northwest Rashid community,” he said. “It’s what the people of the community want. They



The Saddam Department Store after Coalition Forces conducted an offensive against Anti-Iraqi Forces using the building as a rally point. From the rubble, plans are already in the works to construct a park for all citizens of the city to enjoy.

need the peace between the Sunnis and Shia to continue in order to be successful at rebuilding Iraq.

“Everybody’s benefiting from this experience, politically and socially, from the War Relics Initiative.”

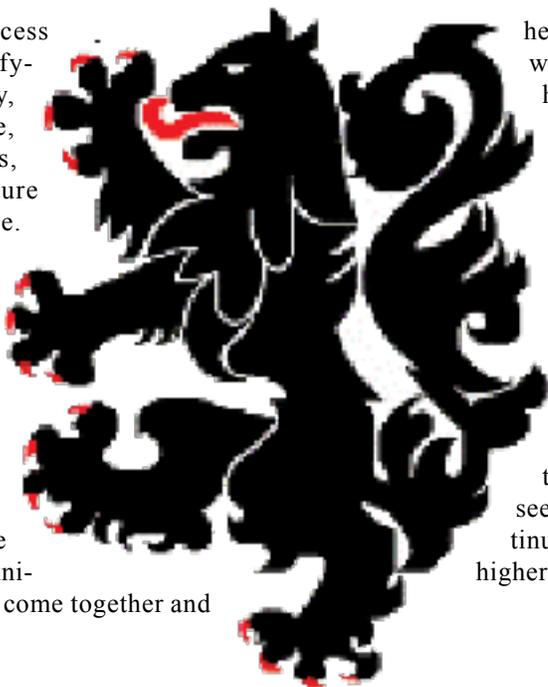
oring Rashid



The mural that replaced Saddam Hussein's image along Airport Road in the Northwest Rashid District. The project, which employed 20 Iraqi painters, would not have been possible without security provided by The 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division's Soldiers.

Finch said the success of the project is gratifying for him personally, and it allows people, Iraqis and U.S. forces, to look toward the future with an optimistic eye.

“It gives me great satisfaction to know that I can give back to a community that didn't have the funds or means to reach some of their goals. It's evident when you talk to the Iraqi national people they are looking for unity, they are looking to come together and



help clean up their country, and when you can turn around and help them get one step closer to that goal, you've got to go to bed at night feeling pretty good,” he said.

“The 1-28 Black Lion family has been able to help motivate and invigorate the community which also leads to people coming together as a community and rooting the insurgents out. “Once they see success stories like the War Relics Initiative, they see it is possible and we can continue to push the bar higher and higher.”

Vanguard PSD rolls

Story by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCF Public Affairs

The sense of brotherhood Soldiers have with each other, whether they served together, with separate units, or even in separate wars, comes from shared experiences that only fellow Soldiers would understand.

For the Hispanic troops on the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division's personal security detachment, there is a special bond for similar reasons due to their cultural background.

"I bonded with these guys right away, but I talk to everybody," said Spc. Oscar Tovar, a medic on the 1-18 Inf. PSD from Palm Springs, Calif., of his Latin American battle buddies.

"I try to get along with everybody," said Spc. Gustavo Pena, a gunner on the 1-18 Inf. psd from Miami, "but we grew up with the same things."

While there are similarities between the Hispanic Soldiers on the 'Vanguard' PSD, they say their heritage had less to do with their decision to serve as much as a calling to do the right thing.

"Our culture has a lot to do with the Bible and about doing good things. Part of that is serving our country," said Spc. Daniel Montanez, a driver on the 1-18 Inf. PSD from New York.

For Tovar, it had less to do with being a Latin American as much as simply being American.

"I'm American so it just seemed right. The last Tovar to fight in a war was my great-grandfather's brother at the turn of the 19th century in the Mexican Revolution," said Tovar, whose father was denied enlistment during Vietnam for medical reasons. "I just thought it's my turn."

For Pena, who moved to the United States from Colombia at the age of 18, it was about giving something back to his adopted country.

"The country took us in as refugees. They give us jobs, and you can actually get a life for yourself," said Pena, who is currently going through the process of obtaining his U.S. citi-

zenship. "You should give back to the country so I stepped up."

Being Hispanic has had little bearing on how they have been treated in the Army, said Montanez. Instead, they get treated like every other Soldier and are rated on one thing: performance.

"I don't think (race) really matters what you are as long as you just do your job," he said.

Pena and his battle buddies on the 1-18 Inf. PSD have been doing their jobs and giving back to their nation, whether it's their adopted or native land, for the past 14 months, and they don't seem to be ready to quit anytime soon. Tovar, Montanez and Pena have all re-enlisted to continue their service to the United States in a time of war.

The 'Vanguards' of 1-18 Inf. are deployed out of Schweinfurt, Germany, and currently attached to the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division of Fort Riley, Kan.



s with Latin flavor



Across Top: Spc. Oscar Tovar, a medic on the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division personal security detachment from Palm Springs, Calif., on a mission in the Rashid District of southern Baghdad, Sept. 8. Tovar, a Soldier of Mexican decent, said it felt right for him to serve for the simple fact that he's an American. "I just thought it's my turn," he said.

Above: Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno, the commanding general of Multinational Corps-Iraq, reenlists Tovar at Forward Operating Base Falcon's Fallen Heroes room, July 21. Tovar said he reenlisted because he loved his unit and he loved being a medic.

Left: Spc. Daniel Montanez, a Bradley driver on the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division personal security detachment from New York, preparing for a mission at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Sept. 8. Montanez, who grew up in a predominantly Puerto Rican community, felt the emphasis on good works in his heritage influenced his decision to serve.

Right: Spc. Gustavo Pena, a Bradley gunner on the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division personal security detachment from Miami, was born and raised in Colombia until the age of 18, when he moved to the United States. He is currently undergoing the process of obtaining his citizenship for the country he serves.





Unbr

Honoring our w

Right: Col. Ricky Gibbs, commander of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Harker Heights, Texas, visited wounded Soldiers at the Fisher House in Washington, D.C., while on leave.

Below Right: Col. Gibbs congratulates Sgt. 1st Class Uviedo, a cavalryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4-1 Brigade Special Troops Battalion, on receiving the Purple Heart at the Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Below: Col. Gibbs visits with Sgt. Joseph Brown and his father at the Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston, Texas.



Broken



Wounded Dragons



Above: Lt. Col. Gregory Gadson, the former commander of the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, poses with his family after an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., Aug. 20. Gadson commanded 2-32 FA from its inception until being wounded in an explosively formed penetrator attack, May 8.

Left: Col. Ricky Gibbs pins the Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, and the Bronze Star on Gadson during a ceremony in Washington, D.C., Aug. 20.

Hispanic Tradition



Story by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBC T Public Affairs

On Sept. 26, there was a patrol through southern Baghdad. It was like every other. The Soldiers encountered the things that are unfortunately commonplace in a city like Baghdad: a car on fire, suspected cache sites, and citizens concerned about their family's safety.

To someone with a keen sense of cultural history, this patrol would not be like any other, however. These Soldiers were led by 1st Lt. Alex Torres, a platoon leader with Troop A, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Columbia, S.C.

Torres is a normal guy. He keeps his Soldiers' spirits high in the early dawn by talking and laughing with them. He gets frustrated when plans on a mission fall through, like anyone else would. He's just as happy as the next man in his platoon to roll back through the gates of Forward

Operating Base Falcon without incident.

So this begs the question, why is a patrol being led by the University of South Carolina graduate special?

Torres, who comes from a military family himself, is upholding the tradition of Latin Americans answering the call to serve in America's time of need.

Torres said his father's service had a direct impact on his decision to carry on this tradition.

"(My father's) a good role model. I've always looked up to him," he said. "By joining up, I'd at least have a good start at being half the man he was."

October is Hispanic Heritage Month, honoring the contributions Hispanics have made to our society, past and present, including the military.

Torres, who grew up in a Puerto Rican family, put the month in perspective.

"There's more sense of pride this month, but we're pretty prideful all the time," he said. "You always see flags across the ve-



Continuing in Iraq

Across Top: First Lt. Alex Torres, a platoon leader with Troop A, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Columbia, S.C., prepares to fire a warning shot while on patrol in southern Baghdad's Rashid District, Sep. 26.

Across Bottom: First Lt. Alex Torres, a platoon leader with Troop A, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Columbia, S.C., talks to an Iraqi man while on patrol in southern Baghdad, Sep. 26.

Right: Korean War veteran, Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) Modesto Cartagena, one of the highest decorated men of the conflict, during a ceremony being held at the U.S. Army Reserve Center in Puerto Nuevo, P.R., marking the presentation of a plaque honoring the bravery and sacrifice of all veterans of the Korean War. Much praise was given to members of the fighting 65th Infantry Regiment veterans, who were some of the most highly decorated soldiers of the Korean War. (Photo by Tech Sgt. Michael Dorsey)

Below: The 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division and 65th Infantry Regiment's unit crests. The 65th Infantry Regiment, a mostly Puerto Rican unit, served with distinction in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. First Lt. Alex Torres of Columbia, S.C., a platoon leader in Troop A, 1-4 Cav, continues the legacy of Hispanics serving in the armed forces with the 'Raiders.'



hicles, shirts and hats. It's not just this month."

In terms of distinguished military service, Latin Americans have plenty to be more than members descended awarded the national Medal conflicts the Civil War nam War.



Latinos fought in every war since the every major War II, where a million Latin been estimated up almost five percent commanding fighting force.

The same way the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment has been a mark of pride for African-Americans, the 65th Infantry Regiment is for Hispanics. The unit fought in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War.

proud of with 40 service of Hispanic having been Congressio- of Honor in ranging from to the Viet-

have also every American Revolution and battle of World as many as half Americans have to serve, making of the entire American

In Korea alone, the "Borinqueneers" of the 65th were awarded 10 Distinguished Service Crosses, over 250 Silver Stars, and more than 600 Bronze Stars.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur may have summed up Hispanics' service best when referring to the Soldiers of the 65th Inf. Regiment.

"The Puerto Ricans forming the ranks of the gallant 65th Infantry on the battlefields of Korea are writing a brilliant record of achievement in battle, and I am proud indeed to have them in this command. I wish that we might have many more like them."



Cobra Commander Captu

by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT Public Affairs

'Combat Camera' is a term reserved for members of the U.S. Army Signal Corps who document the history of their service through still and video images.

The commander of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division's Signal Company is not a combat cameraman, but he has been recognized for his skills with the camera recently in a service-wide contest.

Capt. Kollin Taylor, commander of Company C, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th IBCT from Miami, received honorable mention in a Department of the Army photography competition.

For a man whose interest in photography was first realized at the age of 10, receiving the distinction was a humbling experience.

"Looking at the awards of other people, it was in good company," the Jamaica-born Taylor said. "When I say honorable mention, I am honored to be mentioned in their company."

For the annual competition, there are two groups, civilian and military, with five sub-categories: people, places, objects, experimental and military life.

Taylor's submissions went through contests at Fort Riley, Forces Command and Department of the Army levels. The photographs had to finish in the top five of each round.

Taylor's award-winning photos were in the places and people categories in the military group, one of a Soldier at 4-1 BSTB's force protection lanes at Fort Riley, Kan., and the other during the 4th IBCT's rotation at the National Training Center of Fort Irwin, Calif.

"The good thing about it is it's a Soldier from 1st ID," Taylor said of the I've been in the unit for the last six years basically, and everything's in black and white except for the red in the patch. That's a great source of pride for me."



While 'Captain Snapshot,' as some call him, is satisfied with the plaudits he has received, he does not plan on relishing in the success he's had; instead, he'll be back next year, looking for more.

"I'm a competitor. When I compete, I want to win," he said. "When I look at it, I submitted 50 photos and only two were selected for honorable mention. The two that were selected weren't among my favorites to win."

Taylor has come a long way from when he first picked up a camera as a ten year-old displaying a knack for getting good pictures. Along the way, he's learned lessons he doesn't mind sharing with aspiring photographers.

"Practice makes perfect; the more you shoot, the better you get. Never be afraid to challenge yourself," Taylor said. "If you look at what other people are doing, don't necessarily try to copy them, but they may give you good ideas."



ures Camera Competition



Across Top: Capt. Kollin Taylor, commander of Company C, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Miami, is a regular at events around Forward Operating Base Falcon, such as this change of command ceremony, June 21.

Across Left: The other photo taken by Capt. Kollin Taylor, commander of Company C, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Miami, selected as honorable mention in a Department of the Army photography competition in early September. This one, entitled 'Big Red One,' was taken during 4-1 BSTB's force protection lanes at Fort Riley, Kan. The photo being all black and white except for the red on the unit patch reflected his pride in the 1st Infantry Division, Taylor said.

Top: One of two photos taken by Capt. Kollin Taylor, commander of Company C, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Miami, selected as honorable mention in a Department of the Army photography competition in early September. This one, entitled 'Haze,' was taken during the 4th IBCT's rotation at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., in October and November, 2006.

Right: Capt. Kollin Taylor, the commander of Company C, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Miami, out on a patrol with the military police of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4-1 BSTB, May 16. Taylor said being deployed allows him the opportunity to get unique photographs he would not be able to get otherwise.



Felons keep War

by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT Public Affairs

When a Soldier is outnumbered, the typical image that comes to mind is a combatant beset on all sides by enemy troops, but Soldiers of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division out of Fort Carson, Colo., are outnumbered by something different.

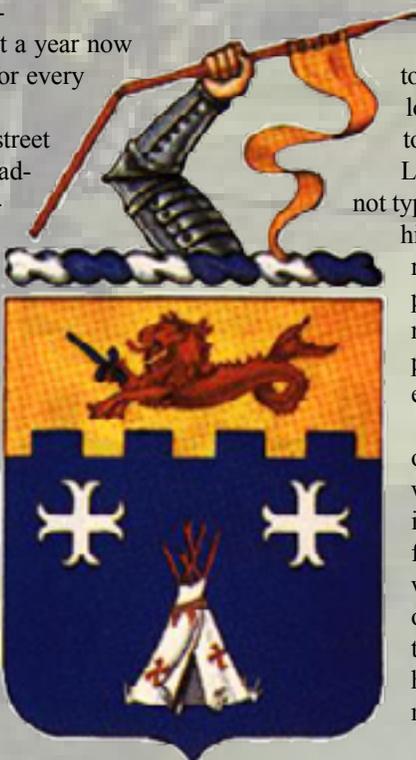
Vehicles.

Felon Co., attached to the Fort Riley, Kan.-based 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., is responsible for maintaining all of 2-12 Inf.'s vehicles, in addition to all other equipment from generators to night vision goggles. The company has been supporting the 'Warriors' for almost a year now with a ratio of 10 vehicles for every one mechanic in the unit.

In a warehouse across the street from their battalion's headquarters, the unit accomplishes this daunting task under cover of darkness. The facility has a variety of trucks with a variety of problems. Some look like nothing is wrong with them; others are in obvious need of repair

Staff Sgt. Lance Scott, a motor sergeant with Felon Co. from Redding, Calif., said getting the job done takes two ingredients from everybody: willingness and skill.

"We cover down in a lot



of directions all the time," he said. "Everybody's got to be willing to do the job below them and have the ability to do the job above them." Light infantry companies are not typically assigned as many vehicles as they have now. As a result, forward support companies such as the Felons do not have the equipment or personnel to take care of an entire battalion.

"The (modified table of organization and equipment) was set up for our mechanics to maintain what an infantry battalion would be, which is probably 25 percent of what we currently maintain," Scott said. "That's how we're geared for our mechanics that we have cur-

rently. We're well over what we're supposed to be maintaining."

To counter this challenge, the Felons taught preventive maintenance checks and services classes to the companies they're responsible for, hoping to prevent a deluge of work.

"You've got to hold them to a standard. Something as basic as them not putting oil in the vehicle, can cause us to have to replace an engine," said 1st Lt. Shawn Trout, the battalion maintenance officer of Felon Co., 2-12 Inf. from Manchester, Vt. "Something as simple as that, can cause us four days of work."

For leaders in a unit as undermanned as theirs, avoiding creating anymore work for their Soldiers and finding a way to keep them fresh are challenges, but Trout and his non-commissioned officers have managed through rotating their troops on different shifts and giving them time off.

As tough as keeping up with all the equipment of a battalion way over its limit, that's only half of Felon Co.'s mission.

riors ready

The other half is making sure the units at the Coalition Outposts have everything they need.

The distribution platoon does that and more. In addition to supplying the COPs, they escort explosive ordnance disposal teams, run recovery missions, and give up Soldiers for base security.

"We're kind of stretched out all over the place," said Staff Sgt. Freddie Hicks, the distribution platoon sergeant from Garrett, Ky. "It's been a learning curve, every day over here. There's not a lot of training that goes on out here, it's all real-world. You don't have the luxury of a lot of time to teach them how to do stuff.

"You just have to tell them, 'Hey, you've got a job to do,' and they get it done. I've got a great platoon."

Learning on the fly is something the Felons have done very well, and the hardest part of getting units what they want is knowing what they want.

"The biggest thing is getting on the same sheet of music as what they want. You just go out and you build it, and if they don't like it, you just go out and rebuild it," Hicks said. "Most of them don't know what they want until it's built and then it's not what they want."



Across: Spc. Scott Case, a truck driver with Company F, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment from Valinda, Calif., works on a Humvee during the unit's weekly preventive maintenance checks and services at the unit's motor pool, Sept. 3.

Above: Spc. Michael Godwin, a cook with Company F, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division from Bowie, Md., inspects the bottom of a light medium tactical vehicle during the unit's preventive maintenance checks and services at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Sept. 3.

Going phishing anyone?

By Warrant Officer David Hoskins
4th IBCT Communications Shop



Hoskins

I had a question asked: "Why is it that I feel informing everyone as to what I do is so important?" There are a number of reasons for this. Primarily, the military has such a vast amount of information that needs to be protected. Research has been done that states 80 percent of the problems that computers have are due to the user.

I would venture to say that 70 percent of those people make the errors because they just don't know. I have made it my mission to educate everyone as to what can be done to make our information safe. I would suggest taking this information home and applying it to your computers too. They are just as vulnerable as the military.

The latest tidbit I have run across is "phishing" and "vishing." Phishing is a bad guy's attempt to lure some sort of information, usually bank numbers, out of you via an e-mail. Vishing is another person's attempt to lure information out of you via a VoIP phone call; again, usually credit card or banking information.

There are a couple of phishing scams going around right now so be very careful. I received one couple of days back was from Citibank stating that there is something wrong with my account, and that I need to reply to the email. I trashed the e-mail right away. I am reading now that Bank of America has a similar scam that is going around. If anyone wants to see it, AKO has posted it under their announcements section on their home page. It's a very official looking letter; don't be suckered into thinking this is real. Vishing is a fairly new trick, but it is none the less very real. A person will call sounding like they are from a bank, for example, and say that there is something wrong with your account. They use a VoIP phone because this technology is used to easily "spoof" (make it seem that they are someone else) bank or military numbers. If they ask for information like routing numbers or alpha roster contacts, call your bank to verify that there isn't something actually wrong with your account or your commo shop to report that there is something going on.

The trick is remembering who initiated the contact. If it was not you, and they ask for any personal information then it is a good bet that they are running a scam. There are strict policies in place at most institutions that state that customer service personnel are not to ask for that info over the phone. How does one know if it is a scam or not? If you get one of these e-mails or phone calls, call the bank with a number that you know is legitimate. If there is a problem with your account, find out that way. If you find yourself clicking away at the e-mail, then take a second and look at the address bar at the top. If you were supposed to go to a Bank of America site, does it say Bank of America? Chances are that it won't if it is a scam. Make sure your family knows about this. My wife was suckered into this mess and it took a couple of weeks to dig out from under it.

On a side note, I had someone ask if this is all conspiracy theories or paranoia. Just ask someone that has had their identity stolen because of all this, they will tell you that this is very real.



Sgt. James Daniel, a squad leader with Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment from Seattle, keeps a vigilant watch while on patrol in Baghdad.

‘We’ve Reached Wednesday’

By Spc. Jonathon Larson
2nd Bn., 32nd Field Artillery

Because 3rd Platoon, Battery A, organized just before the battalion deployed, timing forced us to develop our teamwork and Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures on the run and under the hot sun of the Kuwaiti and Iraqi skies. As artillerymen, we all trained to work behind a howitzer or in a Fire Direction Center; now we conduct patrols on the streets of Baghdad, a line of work which certainly took some getting used to. However, over the last six months I think we have adapted to our new mission pretty well, thanks in no small part to the experience and guidance of our Platoon Sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class McKim.

We have enjoyed a fair amount of success in our missions over the last six months, finding numerous weapons caches and capturing several high value targets. Like the rest of the Proud American Battalion, our platoon has conducted combat operations on a daily basis, and we have been lucky to come through this first half of the deployment unscathed. We do our best to stay safe and prevent complacency so that we can all go home together. Our prayers and well wishes still go out to those, like Lt. Col Gregory Gadson and his family, who are less fortunate.

When I look around our area of operations, I feel that we truly have made progress since our arrival in the Iraqi capital. The local people continually tell us that they feel safer with our Joint Security Station in the neighborhood and our patrols in their streets. A major aspect of our

mission here is training the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police, and the dedicated ‘*jundi*’ and ‘*shurta*’ of both services remain eager to learn from us as we assist them in providing security in Hateen and Yarmouk.

As we conduct dismounted patrols, I notice that the streets are cleaner than when we arrived, the adults greet us and offer tea and bread, and the kids shout, wave, and run after the patrols, usually asking for candy and soccer balls. To be honest, sometimes it feels more like a parade than a combat patrol. I often talk to my friends in other units across Iraq, and they tell me that they are experiencing similar successes, although there are a select few who still encounter the day-to-day “back at square one” scenario.

As we approach the halfway point in our deployment and start to round the bend towards home, I look around at my fellow Soldiers and try to gauge their morale. The R&R program is in full swing, giving us a small taste of home and a much-needed and welcome break from long patrols and tiring guard shifts at the JSS. For those Soldiers who have already taken leave, or for those who still have a couple of months until their R&R, there are still several ways to pass the time and take their minds off of the daily grind. Some play basketball or football, some watch movie after movie on their laptops, and nearly everyone spends a good deal of time just reminiscing about home. Meanwhile, others find comfort in a good book. Just about everyone is excited that the college and NFL football seasons are upon us, and we all hope to catch

a few games between patrols. We all find it funny, and slightly annoying, that AFN (Armed Forces Network) shows us the highlight reel on “SportsCenter” right before showing the actual games, but we all recognize that we are deployed in a combat zone and are fortunate to have so many amenities that our brothers in previous wars did not.

Some people joke that every day in Baghdad is a Monday, due to the repetitive nature of our days here and that sense of dread that comes with Mondays and the start of the work week anywhere. Well, I would venture so far to say that we’ve reached Wednesday in this 15-month long deployment. The “Groundhog Day” feeling is still in effect, but we are making progress in our mission every day, and every Proud American is committed to maintaining the standards that have made us successful to this point.

In all, things are looking pretty good for 3rd Platoon, Alpha Battery. The heat has started to subside, if only slightly, and we know that cooler days are ahead. The relationships we have built in western Baghdad are paying off as we expand the network of patriotic Iraqis with whom we work, and with every terrorist we capture comes a renewed sense of purpose and accomplishment. We are still far away from home, in terms of both time and distance, but the finish line, while out of sight now, is just over the horizon. We look forward to hitting that exact halfway point, knowing that from there we will always have fewer days in front of us than we do behind us.

Rangers making impact on Tisa Nissan

By 1st. Lt. Sean Grealish
2nd Bn., 16th Infantry

To say the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment has made an impact on the people living in Tisa Nissan would be an understatement. Every day, these versatile Soldiers patrol the streets of Baghdad, finding, fixing and finishing the enemy. Infantrymen now perform missions more suited to people who work in the State Department.

With such projects as rebuilding an entire sewer system to a literacy program for adults, these Rangers are infantrymen, economists, governance specialists, and civil engineers. Although unglamorous, these missions may be the key to success in Tisa Nissan.

Coalition Forces that were previously in the region would rarely patrol inside of the neighborhoods. Lt. Col. Ralph Kauzlarich gathered his company commanders with the battalion staff and laid out his plan of action. What emerged was Operation Ranger Dominance, a battalion level operation to clear and control Tisa Nissan.

Followed by up-armored Humvees mounted and gunships flying overhead, hundreds of troops walked into the neighborhoods, showing the populace the Rangers could project combat power in Tisa Nissan anytime, anywhere.

This operation was quickly followed by large cache finds and the detainment of many criminals who attacked Coalition Forces and civilians. In addition, the battalion set up Coalition Outposts in three neighborhoods: COP Cajimat in Rissa, COP Bushmaster in Kamaliyah, and COP Pathfinder in Baghdad Jedidah. The Rangers also set up Joint Security Stations at the Al Khansa Iraqi Police Station and the Mashtal

These operations have shown the citizens of Tisa Nissan that the Rangers were a friend and an ally in their struggle against terrorism. So far, the battalion has put over 150 criminals in the Theater Internment Facility.

Although security is an im-

portant factor in helping Tisa Nissan get back on its feet, it is not the only area the Rangers focus on. The unit also focuses on the local Neighborhood Councils in Kamaliyah, Mashtal, Fedaliyah, and Al Amin as well as the District Council of Tisa Nissan to help its members as they try to make democracy work in a country that has lived in a dictatorship for almost 35 years.

Although the council members were initially distrustful of outside help, they have come to respect the company and battalion leadership of the Rangers, taking advice and making huge strides in their respective neighborhoods. In addition to helping with the local government, the battalion has also assisted the local economy with reconstruction of essential services. Recent medical equipment and supply deliveries in Kamaliyah have greatly improved the quality of healthcare for some of the poorest people in Tisa Nissan.

During the hot summer months this year, members of the local government asked for assistance in getting water to the people. The Rangers responded quickly and were able to get daily shipments of water.

Another problem for the area is sewage. Not only is this a terrifying problem for a civilian population, it also presents health problems for them, especially for children. A recent cholera outbreak in Baghdad has been linked to standing sewage in the streets. Yet, even with sewage trucks that pick up the waste in the streets, a longer term solution needs to be reached. Because of where the treatment plants and pump stations are located, the Rangers had to coordinate with adjacent battalions and through the Amanant in order to provide a long term solution.

Recent attempts into addressing this problem have proved successful for the Rangers and it should be solved by the end of this year.

With over seven months of time in theater, the Rangers stand ready to continue their successes here in Tisa Nissan and to defeat any obstacle or enemy which may

'Stache Class

Regulation

Not Regulation



Warrant Officer Joe Simpson, the 4th IBCT air defense systems integrator, demonstrates proper moustache and sideburns appearance to Sgt. McLovin.

Army Regulation 670-1 covers wear and appearance of the Army uniform. In reference to moustaches and sideburns, the regulation states that the sideburns cannot go past the middle of the earlobe, and a moustache must be trimmed to where it does not touch the upper lip and does not pass the corners of the mouth. And now you know...and knowing is half the battle.



Warrant Officer Joe Simpson caught Sgt. 1st Class Rich Razy out of regulation. After giving him a clean shave, corrective training did take place.

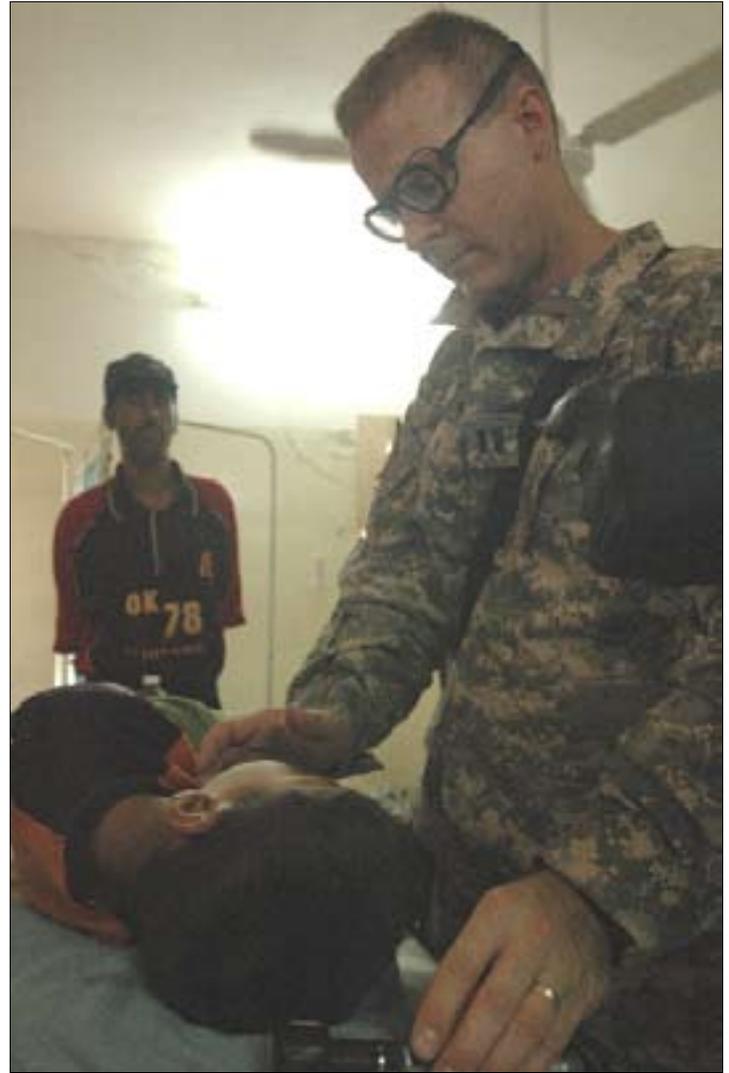
FIRST TO BATTLE

1-18 Inf. 'Vanguards' bring healthcare to citizens of Rashid

First to Heal

by Spc. Ben Washburn
4th IBCT Public Affairs

Right: Sgt. Tracey Lyons, a medic with Company C, 610th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st Inf. Div. from New York, takes the blood pressure of an Iraqi woman Sept. 8 in the Radwaniyah area of Baghdad.



Above: Sgt. 1st Class Edgar Luna, the medic platoon sergeant of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Inf. Div., attached to 4th Brigade, 1st Inf. Div., applies a bandage to a severe electrical burn on a patient Sept. 8 in the Radwaniyah area of Baghdad.

Left: Capt. Russell Giese, of River Falls, Wisc., a doctor with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Inf. Div., attached to 4th Brigade, 1st Inf. Div. examines an Iraqi girl Sept. 8 in Radwaniyah as the girl's mother looks on.

God teaches through limburger



Everyone has had a super time all morning long. When lunch is done Grandpa is tired and goes to lie down for a little while. Grandma and the grandkids head for the kitchen to make cookies – chocolate chip cookies.

Grandma is supervising the making of the cookies. But, the youngest grandson, Johnny, escapes Grandma's watchful eye, gets some limburger cheese out of the refrigerator, and sneaks into the guest room where Grandpa is sleeping. Johnny rubs some of that smelly cheese into Grandpa's moustache – Grandpa's big long handlebar moustache – and makes good his escape back to the kitchen.

A little bit later Grandpa wakes up and takes a deep breath. That blast of limburger scented air is very unpleasant and Grandpa says, "This bedroom stinks!" Looking for a little relief from the stench Grandpa heads for the kitchen.

He arrives in the kitchen just as the first batch of cookies is coming out of the oven.



Grandma hands him a glass of milk and two hot chocolate chip cookies on a apkin. He goes to a big swig of milk to down the cookie and gets a big breath of limburger. Grandpa exclaims, "This kitchen stinks!"

Grandpa charges out the back door and into the backyard and takes a deep breath. He's hoping to fill his nostrils and lungs with crisp, fresh air. Instead, he is hit again by the limburger cheese. He now concludes, "The whole world stinks!"

While I can have a laugh at Grandpa's expense I do find that some days I have limburger cheese in my attitude. There may be a lot of things that stink around me. But, as much as they may stink I have to remember that my attitude is my responsibility. And, the consequences of my actions related to that attitude are my responsibility as well.

Perhaps a prayer for dealing our attitudes could be: "God grant us the peace to accept the things we cannot change; courage to change the things we can; and wisdom to know the difference. A-men"

Steel Falcon Chapel Worship Schedule

Sunday
Contemporary Protestant Service
1030
Gospel Service
1300
Latter Day Saints Service
1600
Traditional Protestant Service
1930
Prayer Service
2100

Wednesday
Gospel Service
1900

Thursday
Catholic Mass
1900

Friday
Jewish Service
1800

Saturday
Liturgical Worship Service
2000

Bible Studies

Tuesday
1900

Thursday
1930

FALLEN DRAGONS

NO MISSION TOO DIFFICULT
NO SACRIFICE TOO GREAT

"If you are able, save them a place inside of you and save one backward glance when you are leaving for the places they can no longer go. Be not ashamed to say that you loved them, though you may or may not have always. Take what they have left and taught you with their dying and keep it with your own. And in that time when men feel safe to call the war insane, take one moment to embrace the gentle heroes you left behind."

*- Maj. Michael Davis O'Donnell
Dak To, Vietnam, January 1, 1970*

Pfc. David Lane
2-16 Inf. September 4

Pvt. Randol Shelton
2-16 Inf. September 4

Spc. Joshua Reeves
2-16 Inf. September 22

Sgt. Joel Murray
2-16 Inf. September 4

Spc. Rodney Johnson
1-4 Cav. September 4

Sgt. 1st Class James Doster
2-16 Inf. September 29

Staff Sgt. Courtney Hollinsworth
1-4 Cav. September 9

DUST IN THE WIND



A Blackhawk helicopter kicks up sand while landing at Coalition Outpost Banshee in the Rashid District, Aug. 27. COP Banshee is occupied by troops of 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division of Fort Riley, Kan. (Luedeke/4th IBCT Public Affairs)