



# Rakkasan Report

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## OPERATION SWARMER

*By Sgt. Ryan Matson  
101<sup>st</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade*

**SAMARRA, Iraq (March 22 2006)** -- During Operation Swarmer, the largest Air Assault since the initial invasion of Iraq, the Company A, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 187<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment "Angels from Hell" were among the most productive units in locating weapons caches and detaining suspected insurgents. Combined, the company found five caches (one located by First Platoon, four by Second Platoon) and detained 18 suspected terrorists during the six-day mission. Company commander Capt. Jeff Lesperance said the company thoroughly searched more than 100 houses and questioned more than 200 people in an area about 15 miles wide by 15 miles deep

in the rural desert Northeast of Samarra, Iraq. The company also found numerous small stashes of prohibited weapons and ammunition during their raids (one AK-47 or rifle and one magazine is permitted for every adult male in a household.)

Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Angelo Lettiere, Second Platoon's Platoon Sergeant, said that the caches his companies found were hidden in a well, a goat pen, in the wall of a building they bulldozed, and in fuel barrels. He credited his Soldier's thorough searching with the platoon's results. A new Soldier to the company, Pvt. Aaron



Photo courtesy of Company A, 3-187 In.  
**Spc. Justin Bohannon, Company A, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, before the initial Air Assault of Operation Swarmer March 13 near Samarra, Iraq.**

Pildner, of Ashtabula, Ohio, had a hand in finding all four of the caches found by Second Platoon. **- See SWARMER Page 3**

## Salah Ad Din Key to a Prosperous Iraq



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jesse C. Riggins

**Col. Mike Steele, 3rd Brigade Combat Team commander, speaks with a concerned council member at the governance meeting held 7 March. The meeting marked the first time the local and provincial leaders of Salah Ad Din came together as a whole.**

*By Staff Sgt. Jesse C Riggins  
3 BCT Public Affairs*

**TIKRIT, Iraq (March 22 2006)** -- Government officials from the Salah Ad Din met with city and county official on 7 March to discuss solutions to issues the province is facing . This was the first time the group has come together as a whole. Col. Mike Steele, commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Combat Team and several 3<sup>rd</sup> BCT battalion commanders led the coalition contingent that attended the meeting.

The Governor, Deputy Governor and the Provincial Council Chairman of Salah Ad Din Province led the meeting. The main topics were security and infrastructure construction. City mayors and Sheiks attended the meeting to voice their concerns and give feedback to the council.

Governor Hamad Humood Shugti began by addressing security. Over the last two months The Golden Mosque in Samarra was attacked along with many other holy places in Iraq. He pointed out that the attacks were on Iraq as a whole and intended to divide the country. **- See SALAH AD DIN Page 4**

## Editors Notes

The 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment is currently attached to the 3rd BCT Public Affairs Office to help us cover all units in the Rakkasan area of operations.

The journalists from the organizations listed below will be covering the Rakkasans in January and February. Look for their stories on television and your local news stands.



Gina Cavallaro



Bill Putnam

The following are links to the Rakkasan Video Magazine.

[http://www.dvidshub.net/?script=video/video\\_show.php&id=10099](http://www.dvidshub.net/?script=video/video_show.php&id=10099)

[http://www.dvidshub.net/?script=video/video\\_show.php&id=10099](http://www.dvidshub.net/?script=video/video_show.php&id=10099)

[http://www.dvidshub.net/?script=video/video\\_show.php&id=10107](http://www.dvidshub.net/?script=video/video_show.php&id=10107)

[http://www.dvidshub.net/?script=video/video\\_show.php&id=10784](http://www.dvidshub.net/?script=video/video_show.php&id=10784)

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## Rakkasans and IA Uncover Caches During Swarmer



Photo By Staff Sgt. Jesse Riggins

Rakkasans from Company C, 3/187, walk along a flooded irrigation trench in search for caches on March 18, the third day of Operation Swarmer. Company C and their Iraqi counterparts, 1st Company, 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division discovered several caches during the six day mission, one of which held rocket propelled grenade launchers, AK-47 assault rifles and approximately sixty timers used for detonating improvised explosive devices.

## Rak 7 Sends

**RAKKASANS!!** There are a lot of great things you and your organizations have been doing on a daily basis over the last 6 months. Most recently you took the fight to the enemy during operation Swarmer; the largest air assault mission since OIF 1. Swarmer was a combined effort in all aspects of the operation. Three Rakkasan Battalions, 3-187 In., 1-187 In. and 2-9 Cav., hit the ground running showing our Iraqi Army counterparts what right looks like. 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation was the backbone of the operation providing 171 helicopters that flew over 1,000 hours. The mission lasted six days. I know it was tough on Soldiers and equipment. It's appreciated, and it is making a difference, not only in Iraq, but also in the security of our families back home.

During the next half of the fight, remind our Junior leaders that our most powerful weapon is our Soldiers. A rifle is only as lethal as the man pulling the trigger. Let's ensure that Rakkasans remain the most lethal weapon in Salah Ad Din Province. Continue enforcing standards, discipline and conducting risk assessments mitigating unsafe acts. No Soldier should be lost due to negligence.

I need you to continue meeting the commander's intent, conducting on the job training with Iraqi Security Forces, training them with the same intensity and drive you train Rakkasans with. In my travels I continue observing joint combat patrols with the Iraqi Army in the lead. These missions are drawing the ISF closer to a steady state and preparing them to assume control of Salah Ad Din. Great job and keep it up!

Lastly, I ask all Rakkasans to continue sharpening Bayonets and looking after their comrades in arms. Thank you, for all you and your Soldiers do every day in this ever changing and challenging environment. As a result of your hard work, Iraq is on a positive glide path to a future of Progress and Freedom.

"Ne Desit Virtus

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR VINCENT CAMACHO



## SWARMER

He had been trained on using the mine sweeper/metal detector he found the caches with just prior to the mission by Spc. Patrick O'Brien of Parkeville, Kansas.

"The one cache I found in a well with Pvt. Pildner, we found Rocket Propelled Grenades, scopes, ammunition for various pistols and rifles, TNT, mortar tubes, mortar rounds, and night vision goggles," O'Brien said.

"Pvt Pildner was down there with an Iraqi Army troop, and they came across several layers of soda cans and Pildner kept getting a strong signal indicating there was something more down there. The Iraqi Army Soldier continued to dig through the ground and eventually found a burlap sack. He dug around it, pulled it up and it contained a 60 mm mortar tube. Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Lettiere always told us, if there's a mortar tube, there's mortars, so we continued to dig in the area and found a 55 gallon drum and the lid to a large blue barrel. We dug that up, and within it we found four RPGs. We dug some more and found the second barrel with the scopes, NVGs, another mortar tube, ammunition and a machine gun. I was a little excited. I know that small amount may not make much of a difference, but overall, we're at least hurting them somewhat. Pildner's got that minesweeping down to a tee."

"It feels good to do," Spc. Jeremy Hayhurst of Oakland, Md., who found a small cache of assault rifles and ammunition with Spc. Justin Bohannon of Richland, Wash., said. "It's less stuff that can be used against us, the Iraqi

Army and the civilians here."

Hayhurst and Bohannon found two AK-47s in some barrels outside one of the searched homes.

"One was in the clear in the bottom of an empty fuel barrel," Bohannon recalled. "The other was about half full and when we put a stick in there and felt around we could tell there was something in there. We did an extremely thorough search spending about two and a half to three hours on every site."

"I liked finding the caches," Pildner said. "It made me feel real good that I was doing my job, and was part of the operation and was able to help out even if I'm kind of low, just a private, I was still able to help out."

First Lt. Adam Scher, the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon's Leader, said that on March 16, the first day of the mission, first platoon Air Assaulted to the house of a High Value Target. While the HVT was not in the house at the time, the platoon was able to find people associated with other people suspected of terrorist activity in the area and find a small cache of weapons and ammunition. Meanwhile, second platoon was Air Assaulted to an area where a cache was suspected to be located. At their site, Second Platoon didn't find the suspected cache, but found the others in the immediate area. Meanwhile, third platoon acted as an Aerial Reaction Force, flying in helicopters from the 101<sup>st</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade, ready to lend assistance should either platoon encounter heavy contact.

Throughout the mission, American Soldiers worked hand-in-hand with Iraqi Forces. Company A searched every objective with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Division, Iraqi Army. Scher said he thought working with the Iraqi Army was an advantage.

"They know these areas and they know where to search," he said. "Their knowledge of the culture and the people is a huge bonus."

Bohannon agreed.

"They know the surrounding areas and they



Photo By Sgt. Ryan Matson

**Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Crisostomo, a platoon sergeant with Company A, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, shakes hands with a little Iraqi girl during Operation Swarmer March 17 in Iraq.**

know exactly where someone would place things, so I think they did a great job at pointing out hiding spots, it helped us out a lot. It felt real good that they contributed a lot. We feel more confident with each other."

Letteire said he can see the Iraqi Army Soldiers improving as time progresses and the two units continue to work together.

"They feel a sense of pride working with us, and if you ask them they'll tell you that," he said.

Lesperance said he was impressed with the way his "Angels from Hell" performed during the operation. Though the company usually conducts mounted joint patrols in Tikrit, Iraq, with the Iraqi Army, he said this type of mission comes naturally to the troops.

"Kicking down doors and searching buildings is what we're trained to do as infantrymen, and it's like riding a bike, it all comes back to you," he said. And though he said the media may be downplaying the effectiveness of the mission, he knows the things his Soldiers found saved American and Iraqi lives.


"Even if we would have found no caches or would not have detained any suspects, this mission would have been a success," Lesperance said. "This mission demonstrated our ability to team with the Iraqi Army and project our force to deter terrorism in Iraq. It denies them safe haven and sanctuary in the desert. They'll constantly be looking over their shoulders, hearing helicopters, wondering if we're coming after them." 



Photo By Sgt. Ryan Matson

**Sgt. Nicholas Walters (left), Company A, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, talks with two Iraqi Army Soldiers during Operation Swarmer March 16 in Iraq.**

## SALAH AD DIN

The Deputy Governor, Abdulla Hassen Mohamed, pointed the finger at four major groups responsible for conducting and funding attacks. Two are Iraqi groups and two are from other countries.

Members of the former regime aim to disrupt the new government and send the message that the country can not be ruled without Saddam. Takfiri (strict Islamic idealists) are the second Iraqi group. Their motives are similar but they use the Islamic faith to disguise their intentions. They believe anyone against their interpretation of Islam deserves to die, and if someone works with the new government or coalition forces they are against Islam.

Takfiri is a term used in the Quran used to describe the act of holding someone accountable for their disbelief in God. Islam, much like Christianity, reserves judgment and death for the authority of God.

Abdulla said the other two groups are based outside the country; funding and conducting attacks in Iraq.

Unemployment is a huge contributing factor to attacks. Insurgents will pay upwards of five hundred US Dollars to place an explosive device targeting security forces or infrastructure in Iraq according to Iraqi officials.

Provincial Council Chairman of Salah Ad Din Province, Sheik Rasheed Ahmad Osmar, addressed this issue with a new budget plan for the Province. Over one hundred billion Iraqi Dinar are allocated to the province for reconstruction and civil infrastructure projects.

Anti-Iraqi Forces attacks and corruption hinders distribution of these funds making security and accountability the foremost concern in all projects.

“Many contracts have been assigned and no one held the contractor accountable for the work,” said Abdulla.

This has led to problems with many projects in Salah Ad Din ranging from incompatible supplies, to projects not being completed.

Sheik Rasheed stressed the importance of supporting privately owned and operated businesses.

“We have waited on the government for years and years to provide



Photo By Staff Sgt. Jesse Riggins

**Iraqi Army Soldier speaks to an older man about the security situation in his village on a joint mission with Company C, 3/187.**

jobs,” said Rasheed, “and we have seen unemployment rates increase not drop.”

He further explained that security is essential to stimulating private businesses and that the people must support the Iraqi Security Forces to make this happen.

“We must support [the ISF] morally and financially,” said Rasheed.

Despite the turmoil in Salah Ad Din Province progress is being made. There are success stories through out the province.

In the wake of the bombing of the Golden Mosque, the Iraqi Security Forces secured the area. They showed discipline and restraint while being ridiculed by the public and the media.

Recently upgrades were made to the electrical power supply system in Baiji. This is the first upgrade the city received since 1991, and it will help provide reliable power to the entire city.

US forces are scaling back operations all around Salah Ad Din. The Iraqi Police are patrolling the streets and the Iraqi Army is assuming battle space around the cities.

Local citizens are risking their own lives to report kidnappings and murders according to Rasheed.

All of these things are signs of progress and hope for Salah Ad Din and the country of Iraq. Perhaps Salah Ad Din will once again serve as the “light of hope” that will reunite a troubled nation.

“For those who fight for it, freedom has a flavor the protected will never know,” said Col. Steele.

Steele describes this time in Iraq’s history as sand in an hourglass.

“It is your job to grab the sand and take advantage of this opportunity,” Steele said as he addressed the attendants of the meeting. “So many times, I have watched the opportunities of life slip through the fingers of those who won’t grab it.”

Steele continued saying that the people of Iraq have an opportunity most never know; to write their own history.

“Fifty years from now your grandchildren will be reading history books,” said Steele. “The question you need to ask yourself is; what will that history be.”



Photo By Spc. Matt Wrzesinski

**A detainee waits to be transported to a local detainee facility. Ridding the country of AIF was one topic discussed in the meeting.**



# IA Takes Larger Role in Security of Iraq

*By Spc. Matt Wrzesinski*  
3 BCT Public Affairs

**SAMARRA, Iraq (February 22, 2006)** -- The Iraqi Army provides security for the citizens of Iraq as they gain experience and assume more responsibility with the help of coalition forces. The help of coalition forces is progressively being reduced as Iraqi Security Forces begin to take control of their country.

Rakkasans from 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 187<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment watched as 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division took one step closer to the goal of a self-governing Iraq during a Battle Space Assumption ceremony Feb. 22. The ceremony signified the Iraqi army taking full control of nearly 10% of Area of Operation Iron, north of Samarra.

"This is the first step in 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. taking full control of AO Iron," said Capt. Peter Carey, New York, NY, Military Transition Team, 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Troops Battalion.

The ceremony marked a new step in the partnership between the Rakkasans and IA. Although only a portion of AO Iron is solely in the hands of 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn., they are taking a new role in all missions in the AO.

"Our goal was to have full emergence between us and the IA," said Carey, "From now on all missions will include Iraqi forces."

The full emergence of the two units was achieved through joint missions and training. As 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. became more efficient, they moved from being a support element to becoming the main effort of missions. The experience 2 Bn. gained through the joint missions made the Rakkasans confident that they were ready for a bigger role in the security of AO Iron.



Photo By Spc. Matt Wrzesinski

Rakkasans from Company C, 3/187 In., and Soldiers from 3<sup>rd</sup> Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division, wait for their ride home after raiding a suspected terrorist training facility outside of Samarra Feb. 27.

"(The Rakkasans) felt (2<sup>nd</sup> Bn.) showed the competence to assume the battle space," said Carey, "This was attributed to the hard work of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion in AO Iron."

Since the ceremony, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. has fulfilled the new role given to them.

2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. gives the Rakkasans another unit to use when special missions arise.

They helped capture several suspected terrorists during an air assault raid Feb. 27. They operated along side the Rakkasans and cleared the section assigned to them.

Although the IA are not fully capable of taking charge of the whole area, the only way they can learn is to have a bigger part in the missions.

"Even when we're on patrol, we're still training," said Staff Sgt. Jesse Flegal, Johnsonburg, PA, Company C, 3-187.

2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. doesn't have all the logistical

systems in place to completely secure AO Iron. Rakkasans still provide logistical support for most missions but they are helping with 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. put their own systems in place.

"We give them the enablers to complete the mission," said Carey, "They just don't have the systems in place yet."

The Rakkasans goal is to train and equip 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. so they can take full charge of AO Iron in the future.

"We want to develop them so they're not only the lead in missions but they're doing them without our support," said Carey. "We will pull back and only be there for emergencies."

IA across the country have been taking bigger roles in providing security for the citizens in their AO. The Rakkasans hope this effort will add to the others and bring Iraq closer to its goal.

"The big picture of this," said Carey, "is Iraq providing security for Iraqis."

# LEADER MORTAR MEN FIGHT FOR TOP GUN

*By Spc. Kenia Kraus*  
**3 BCT Public Affairs**

**BAYJI, Iraq (March 7, 2006)** Rakkasans from the mortar platoon and line company mortar sections, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 187<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, competed for the coveted Top Gun award on Forward Operating Base Summerall Mar. 7.

A mortar team must pull together as a cohesive unit to earn the title Top Gunner. Generally, a mortar team consists of gunners, ammo bearers, and a Fire Direction Center (FDC). The FDC receives a grid on the target then downloads the data into a computer which determines how the gunner should aim the mortar tube. Finally the ammo bearers 'hang' the round.

"You gotta have a strong team," said Staff Sgt. Phillip Owens, Company A, 1/187, Mortars Section Sergeant. "If you don't have strong cohesion, you're not going to have a strong mortar section."

Every six months the gun teams go through a series of examinations, both written and hands on, to update their certification. The certification process begins with refreshers to assess weak areas. Then the section sergeant takes an FDC exam in which they explain the solutions to a variety of fire missions an FDC may confront on the firing line. Then the team tests on all various components of the 60, 81, and 120 mortar weapon systems. The final phase of testing is the gunnery test; a timed



Photo By Spc. Kenia Kraus

From left, Sgt. Alexy Rodriguez, Gunner, Spc. Robert Lawler, Assistant Gunner, Staff Sgt. Phillip Owens, Mortar Section Leader, and (not pictured) Sgt. David Cascaddan, Squad Leader, Company A, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, bring home the coveted Top Gun trophy Mar. 7.

dry fire exercise on every possible kind of mortar mission.

"Yeah, that seems simple," said 1LT David Howald, Alpha Co. Fire Support Officer, "but there are lots of variations and it's all about perfection, or else the reaction will be slow."

The two days of exams all culminate to the last day of live fire exercises.

"The last day is to show that you can put everything to the test," said Owens. "You get to see who's really the best."

Up to this point all the tests are graded and the points tallied. The last day is an assessment of the team's capabilities and is not added to their overall scores but in the minds of the mortar teams it's a win or lose competition for best gun team. From the start, Alpha and

Charlie company mortar sections knew they were both vying for the title.

"From day one we knew Crusher [C Co.] was our only competition," said Owens. "It was a tight race but Alpha company cleaned up."

In the end all participants demonstrated their unique ability to fulfill the duties of infantrymen in a combat zone and to master the mortar weapon system; a whole discipline in of itself.

"They maintain a regular patrol schedule just like the line platoons, but on top of that these guys are doing other tasks and constantly training up on mortars," said Howald. "That's pretty impressive."

## Civil Affairs Team Important to Strong Relationship With Iraqis

*By Sgt. Waine Haley*  
**133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

**SAMARRA, Iraq (March 7, 2006)** – Welcome to the world of Civil Affairs, where in one minute you could be drinking Chai tea with the mayor and the next you could be on a combat patrol with Iraqi Security Forces. Civil Affairs, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 187<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, works with the civilian population in numerous ways. One of the most effective ways is to coach the local government on developing the infrastructure through numerous projects.

This Civil Affairs team monitors projects that are under construction in the city of Samarra.

The CA team can make recommendations to the Samarra leadership and to Coalition Forces.

"The Civil Affairs team in Samarra has about 30 different projects going on at this time," said Capt. Chris Brawley, a civil military affairs officer, Headquarter and Headquarters Company, 3 /187<sup>th</sup> In. "They range from improving the electrical power grid, water treatment facilities and many others different projects... too many to list."

One of the latest projects important to the locals, as well as the international community, is the Golden Mosque. This religious landmark was severely damaged by AIF in February.

"The US has offered to help the locals rebuild the mosque, - *See CIVIL AFFAIRS* Page 7



Photo By Staff Sgt. Jesse Riggins

The Civil Affairs team tries to reach out to the Iraqi youth through constant visits to their communities



# Rakkasan Keeps Fellow Soldiers Safe With Technology



Photo By Spc. William Jones  
Spc. Adam Holloway, a native of Tuscaloosa, Al., checks in day-workers as he operates a security scanner at Forward Operating Base Remagen, in Tikrit, Iraq.

*By Spc. William Jones*

*133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

**TIKRIT, Iraq (February 28, 2006)** -- A company of field artillery Soldiers are guarding the front gate of Forward Operating Base Remagen not with heavy artillery, but with sophisticated technology.

Spc. Adam Holloway, Company B, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 320<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment, is ensuring the safety of his fellow Soldiers by operating a sophisticated metal detector, which is actually a type of x-ray machine that takes detailed photos.

"It's a huge time saver over having to pat each person down as they come in," said Holloway.

Each day, workers entering the base are checked for unauthorized weapons and the procedure can be very time consuming but this new technology helps speed the process.

Holloway has seen many improvements to security in Iraq during his four-year enlistment. This is his second deployment to Iraq and his second time stationed at Remagen.

"Yes, I helped to build Remagen and now I get to help shut it down," said Holloway.

The base is scheduled to be turned over to Iraqi government in the near future.

The Iraqi police and the Iraqi Army have been receiving training from the Soldiers stationed at Remagen. Holloway has seen local security improve since his first deployment in 2004.

Holloway enlisted in the Army when he graduated high school. He is 22 years old and is from Tuscaloosa, Ala. He recently reenlisted and has full intention of making the Army a career. He is planning to apply to warrant officer school when he returns to Fort Campbell so he can become a pilot.

## CIVIL AFFAIRS

but the Samarra government wants to accomplish it on their own," said 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Peter Hegseth, an assistant civil affairs officer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 187<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, known as Iron Rakkasans.

Samarra's economy was based on tourism, but ever since AIF have destroyed many of the tourist sights, the local government has to find other means of revenue, said Staff Sgt. Robert Nevarez, a team leader of Troop 1461, Tactical Psychological Operation Company.

The CA team is working with the government to help find revenue for the city. One method of revenue that can be established is through the rebuilding of the infrastructure. These contracts can bring in millions of dollars, but it's not that simple. The main issues are funding and security.

Funding can come from two primary sources: one is the Iraqi government, where the funds will start in Baghdad and trickle through Tikrit then to city of Samarra, or two from Coalition Forces. Though the Coalition intends to have the local government be more self-sufficient.

One recent mission showed the diversity required of a Civil Affairs Soldier. Following a meeting with the mayor and city council of Samarra, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Soldiers volunteered to assist on a raid in an area of town that was thought to be the home to an Al-Qaeda leader. While the CA team was cordoning and searching a block of the neighborhood, they were hit with two rocket-propelled grenades. The CA team




Photo by Spc. Waine D. Haley

Civil Affairs Soldiers from 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 187<sup>th</sup> In. are working with local officials in Samarra to rebuild the Golden Mosque that was attacked last month by terrorists.

fell into their roll as Soldiers and returned fire.

After the engagement, the team put their Civil Affairs' hats back on and assessed the damage to local civilian homes and businesses. If there was any damage, the team offered compensation. Some locals took the compensation and some refused it, but all were cooperative with the CA team.

Civil Affairs Soldiers have many different duties at many different levels and are uniquely qualified to project a positive image of the U.S. Army to the civilian population they serve. The more the Army can do that, the more chances they have to connect with locals and provide for a safe and secure Iraq. 



# SWARMER



## *Photos By Staff Sgt. Jesse C. Riggin - Operation Swarmer*

was the largest air assault offensive since OIF I and it was the largest joint operation in history of the war in Iraq. One thousand five hundred Soldiers took part in the operation, over half of which were Iraqi forces. The main effort of Swarmer was the Iraqi National Police (Commandos). The mission was a mile stone for Iraqi Security Forces taking control of operations in Iraq according to US and Iraqi officials. In conjunction with the ground forces, the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade provided 171 helicopters and pilots who flew over one thousand hours during the operation.





# IA Medics Give Back to the Community

*By Spc. Matt Wrzesinski*  
**3 BCT Public Affairs**

**AD DAWR, Iraq (March 12, 2006)**

Since the Rakkasans arrived in Iraq, the Iraqi Army has gained a bigger part in providing security for the citizens of Iraq. The IA has taken a bigger role in interacting with the citizens of Iraq and showing them that they are hard at work to make Iraq a safe place to live.

Hunters from 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment, and Soldiers from 4<sup>th</sup> Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division visited three schools throughout the Ad Dawr area 9 -12 March. The purpose of the visits was to give the IA medics a chance to interact with the local children.

"We wanted to provide positive interaction between the IA and the Iraqi children," said Capt. Jennifer Bell, Bourbonnais, IL, Squadron Surgeon, 2-9 Cav.

Over the past three months IA medics have been teaching 4<sup>th</sup> Co. medics basic medic skills including treating trauma patients and running sick call.

"My goal is when we leave their skills are equivalent to our medics," said Bell.

Their dedication and hard work was apparent to the Hunters who work with

them on a daily basis.

"I get to work with the IA medics for a few hours everyday," said Bell. "They're compassionate human beings and talented medics."

4<sup>th</sup> Co. greeted the children with school supplies and books. The gifts were used as a way to introduce the children to the men who provide them security every day.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Co. medics then gave the children classes on basic first aid. Classes included the Heimlich maneuver and how to properly stop bleeding. The children were given a chance to try these techniques on each other with 4<sup>th</sup> Co. supervision. They also answered any questions the children had.

Although Rakkasans were present, they took a backseat to 4<sup>th</sup> Co. during the mission. The visit was to show the children that the IA is here for them and that they care about their community.

"We want them to see that the IA are people that they can rely on," said Bell.

Most of the children have never met IA before. The Soldiers understand the importance the children play in the future of Iraq.

"The children of Iraq represent our future," said Cpl. Ali Mohammed Nida, 4<sup>th</sup> Co. 1-1-4 IA Div. "We want to show them that we are not bad people and are here to help them."

More of these visits will follow. The Soldiers want to be the ones to form the children's opinion of them. By conducting these visits, the IA can show the children that there is no reason to be scared of them.

"All the children usually see us acting like Soldiers," said Nadi. "By talking to them, we show



Photo By Spc. Matt Wrzesinski

**A medic from 4th Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division, assists a child on proper techniques of how to stop bleeding during a visit to a school in Ad Dawr Mar. 12.**

them that we are just like them and want to make Iraq a better place."

Through these visits the Soldiers hope to connect to more people not just the children they speak to.

"Our hope is that the kids help to transfer our message to their families and friends," said Nadi. "That we are good people who are here to help."

The Rakkasans and IA share the same goal of showing the citizens of Iraq that the IA are the future of a secure Iraq.

"When we leave, it will be the IA's responsibility to win the hearts and minds of their people," said Bell. "When they encourage the kids to ask questions and give them a small bag of school supplies, the IA medics relieve the kids' anxiety and leave them with a happy memory to pass on to their friends and families."



Photo By Spc. Matt Wrzesinski

**Capt. Jennifer Bell, Squadron Surgeon, 2nd Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, talks to children during a visit to a school in Munjamma Mar. 9.**

## Chaplain's Corner

### Stop Fighting

Some days in our lives the Global War against Terror is not the only fighting that can occur in our lives. Finances, relationships and other concerns can all seem to gang up on us to the point we feel outnumbered and surrounded. In Psalm 46: 10, the psalmist gives some of the easiest and yet most difficult action to take in the midst of our greatest conflicts—stop fighting. The psalmist quotes God when

He says, “Stop fighting and know that I am God, supreme among the nations, supreme over the world.” This is not a giving up and throwing our arms up in surrender but rather a willingness to not merely declare that God is in charge in word but in our very actions. When life is pushing in, stop fighting and come back to what you know is true—there is a compassionate God who is greater than any situation we may be facing. Once we stop fighting we are in a better position to hear what God has to say and then more confident to do what he wants us to in any given situation. If God is for us, who can be against us?

CH (MAJ) Doug Prentice  
3BCT Chaplain

## RAP Saves Rakkasan Lives



Photo By Staff Sgt. Jesse Riggins

Sgt. Shawn Arthur (right), 22, from Newport, KY, Spc. Paul Lambert, 22, Noblesville, IN, and Pfc. Joel Leterski, 22, of Hatley, WC, stand in front of the vehicle they were driving when they were hit by a road side bomb on March 24. The team from B Battery, 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, drove directly over a 155 artillery round that detonated under their vehicle which they recently put through the Rakkasan Armament Program. The RAP adds armor to areas of the M1114 Humvee that are left vulnerable with conventional armor. All three of the team members attributed the extra armor and the grace of God to their well-being. Arthur and Leterski both walked away with only minor cuts and bruises. Lambert suffered a broken fibula.

## RAKKASAN PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

The Rakkasan Report is an official publication of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). It is an electronic publication posted bimonthly and can be viewed at [www.dvidshub.net](http://www.dvidshub.net) under Military Publications. The contents are not necessarily the official views or endorsed by the US Government, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army or the 101st Airborne Division.

We welcome submissions and story ideas of any kind. Submissions should be made through Staff Sgt. Jesse C. Riggins at [jesse.charles.riggins@us.army.mil](mailto:jesse.charles.riggins@us.army.mil)

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# **TASK FORCE RAKKASAN**

**IN MEMORY OF**

**GREATER LOVE HAS NO ONE THAN THIS,  
THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS  
JOHN 15:13**



**CPL NYLE YATES**

**B 3-187 INF**

**21 JANUARY 1984 - 16 MARCH 2006**

**'TILL WE FORM AGAIN...**