

IRAQI DESTINY

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Bremer: We got him

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Good evening Mosul!

Spc. Joshua M. Risner

Robin Williams, world famous comedian and actor, entertains the troops at the Mosul airfield Dec. 17. More photos of the event are on page 7.

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Saddam captured

Search ends in Ironhorse AO

by Staff Sgt. David Bennett
Special to American Forces Press Service

AD DAWR, Iraq -- The image of a bearded and bowed Saddam Hussein, who was captured Dec. 13 in this small farming village, is now a worldwide phenomenon.

However, the final chapter in the ousted dictator's apprehension has been a story of patience and persistence for members of the Army's 4th Infantry Division and Task Force Ironhorse, which consists of soldiers from the Army's 82nd Airborne Division and

attached units.

"It feels good," said Spc. Michael Tillery, a 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery Regiment member from Alexandria, Va. who participated in the successful raid. "All the work has paid off and that one step is finally over -- finding Saddam."

The plan to capture the deposed dictator -- code-named "Operation Red Dawn" -- was an exercise in tenacious planning and determination, said Col. James Hickey, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, which spearheaded the operation.

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Staff Sgt. David Bennett

A member of 1st Brigade Combat Team lifts a Styrofoam lid covering the hole where former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was discovered hiding Dec. 13 in the village of Ad Dawr.

Capture of Saddam Not Luck, but Skill

by Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

KIRKUK, Iraq -- Coalition successes in Iraq -- including the capture of Saddam Hussein -- are not the result of lucky breaks, but the patient, exacting work of intelligence professionals and the soldiers who act on their information, U.S. Army

Central Command chief Army Gen. John Abizaid said here today.

Abizaid met with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force Gen. Richard B. Meyers during a stop in this northern Iraqi city. He spoke with the press traveling with Myers.

Abizaid said the key to fighting any insurgency is isolating the enemy.

Coalition forces are isolating the enemy from money, arms and -- with the capture of Saddam -- from its leadership. "Most importantly, you have to isolate the enemy from ever gaining a source of support from the population at large, which I believe they don't have," he said.

Intelligence is helping the coalition better understand how the enemy moves money, people and orders, and that will allow the coalition to defeat them in detail, the general said.

"Make no mistake: the loss of Saddam Hussein is a huge psychological blow and will pay dividends over time," he said. "We've got a lot of fighting ahead of us, but this is a big win for the young soldiers that made it happen, and for the young intelligence professionals that are smart enough to put the information together to lead us to the right place."

Abizaid said that much of this success is due to the intelligence system that commanders put in place.

That process has grown and is maturing quickly, he said. "We continue to use information that we've gained from the intelligence system," he said, "some of which came from the capture of Saddam, ... to continue to take down those folks that are conducting attacks against the coalition," Abizaid said. "In the past 48 hours, we're had a very good haul."

Abizaid said coalition personnel captured several mid-level Baathist leaders of cells in areas where there was not a clear picture of the enemy. "From fighting this particular enemy, (we've learned that) knocking out the mid-level leadership is the key to success," he said. "If they were to take out our lieutenant colonels and colonels, we would have trouble, too. That's what we're doing to them."

The general said that day after day, coalition forces are developing a better view of the people who are standing the way of a new Iraq.

"We have a full-court press on, understanding the environment better and connecting the various pieces of information we have from various sources," he said.

The setup has allowed coalition forces to understand how the former regime terrorist cells work, how they are built and where possible targets are.

He said the coalition is taking down the financiers of these cells, and this may be having an effect.

"There have been a number of interesting attempts to rob

banks," he said. "I don't want to jump to conclusions, but I believe that money is starting to dry up in the resistance, because we are starting to understand where money is starting to come from."

The general is realistic about the situation in Iraq. "There's still a lot of violence ahead in Iraq," he said.

"There are people who don't want new government to come forward. There are people who will fight to the death to prevent that from happening. And it's our job that a new Iraq emerges that Iraqis can be proud of, and allows them to live in a relative degree of freedom they've never had before."

Iraq is not the only hotspot in Abizaid's area.

He said he also is encouraged by the progress being made in Afghanistan.

He said the Loya Jirga meetings, which began Dec. 13, are a step in the right direction politically in that country. Out of the Loya Jirga may come an Afghan constitution and the setup for a permanent government, he said.

There are just over 12,000 U.S. troops in the country, and the fact that the Loya Jirga is taking place at all "is a tribute to the work our people are doing there and to the young folks building the Afghan National Army and the security institutions there," he said.

Visible progress also is being made in rebuilding Afghanistan, the general said.

President Hamid Karzai recently opened the section of the "Ring Road" that links the capital of Kabul to Kandahar in the south.

The journey, which could take up two or three days to accomplish, can now be made in eight hours, Central Command officials said.

In the meantime, military operations against al Qaeda terrorists and Taliban sympathizers continue.

Operation Avalanche continues on the border with Pakistan.

The general said, though, that coalition forces have not encountered large numbers of enemy troops since the summer.

Everything that has been accomplished in Iraq and Afghanistan goes back to the service members, he said.

"The hard work around here is not being done is not by generals and colonels; it's really being done by sergeants, lieutenants and captains," he said.

"These are the guys who understand their environment better and better every day."

The general wants the people of America to understand how great these young service members are. "To the folks back home, I want you to understand that the most important thing that's happening out here is the work our young men and women are doing," he said. "They are great patriots, they are courageous, committed, they are capable. They represent the greatest armed forces in the world."

"But what really makes us great are these young people out here," he continued.

"At this holiday time, I'd ask you to keep them in your thoughts and prayers. They've already gone through Thanksgiving. They are about to go through Christmas and they make our country great."

“Strike” Brigade remembers two fallen comrades

by Pfc. Thomas Day
40th PAD

MOSUL, Iraq -- Friday was a day of remembrance for the 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), as the brigade's first and second battalion remembered two fallen soldiers. Separate ceremonies were held in Mosul, where both soldiers died in separate operations this past week.

Pfc. Jason Wright, a Squad Automatic Weapon gunner with the 1-502nd Infantry Regiment, was killed Monday in an attack while guarding a Mosul gas station. Spc. Ray J. Hutchinson lost his life the day prior in an Improvised Explosive Device attack on a ground convoy.

Pfc. Jason Wright, 19

Wright had enlisted right out of high school, leaving his family and his hometown of Luzerne, Mich., to become a sol-

dier. He landed in Kuwait after just four months at Fort Campbell with the 101st Airborne Division, where he was picked up as Sgt. First Class Michael Davis's driver. Davis remembered Wright as "my driver, my friend...my son."

"He always had the correct response when you asked him anything."

Capt. Erik Hartel, Wright's 2nd Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander, also spoke on Wright's remarkable ability as a soldier. "His easy going, care free attitude made him an ideal liason to the Iraqi people."

Wright was known to fill an entire barracks hall with the music of his favorite band, Evanescence, "when he woke up and when he went to sleep," remembered Pfc. Chris Raniag. The Evanescence hit, "My Immortal," was given one last spin for Wright as his 101st brothers gave their last respects after the end of the ceremony.

Spc. Ray J. Hutchinson, 20

"He always held his chin up. That's how

I will always remember Ray," said Capt. Michael Wisser, Company A, 2-502nd Infantry Regiment commander. "You are my hero and I salute you."

Hutchinson also enlisted shortly after graduating high school in League City, Texas, where he wrote for the school newspaper and played in the band. He was also a state champion rock climber.

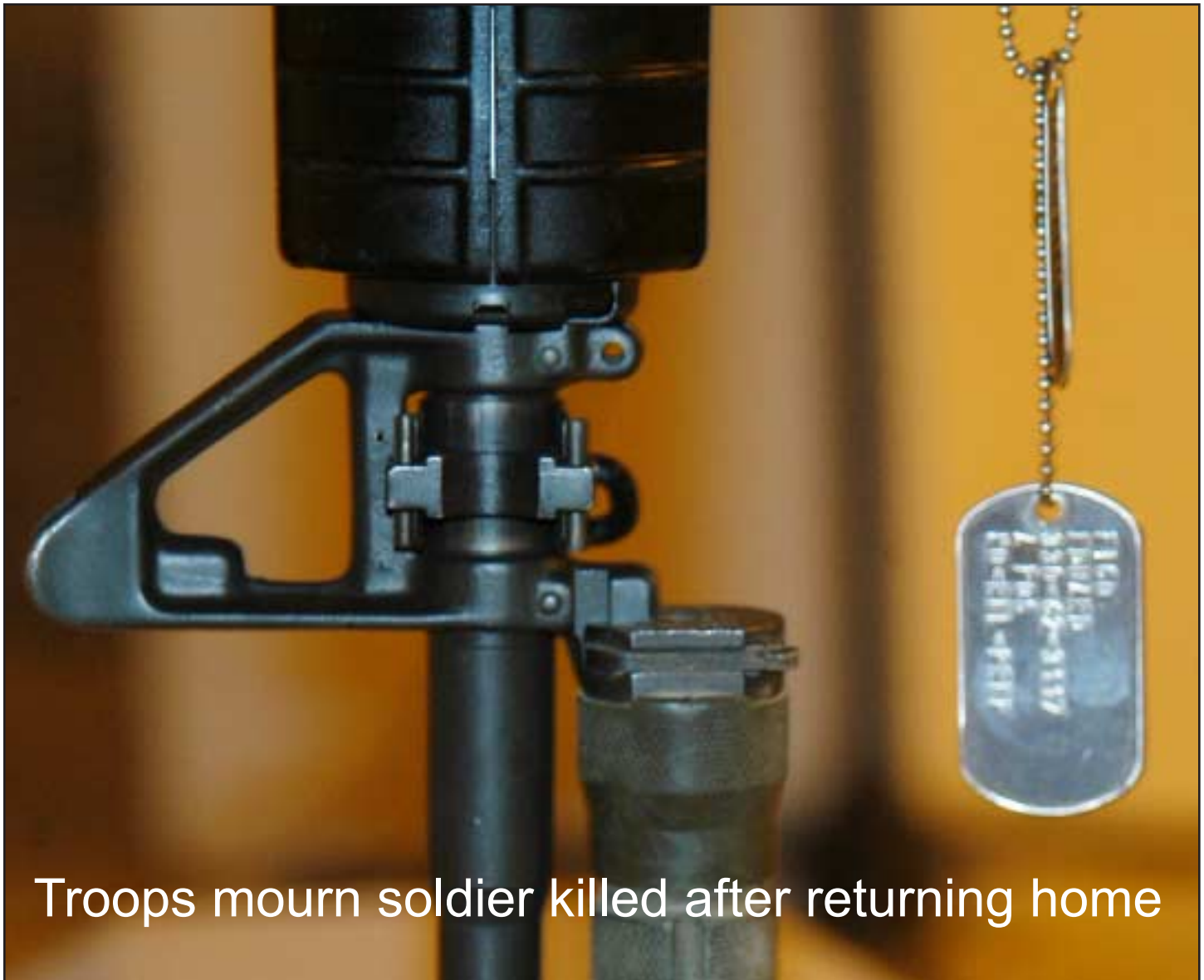
"He would inspire," remembered Spc. Paul Phillips. "No matter if he would have stayed in the Army or got out and went into the civilian world, he would have been an amazing leader." Hutchinson had looked into submitting his Warrant Officer application packet, if he chose to stay in the Army.

Lt. Col. Stephen Bruch, 2-502nd Infantry Regiment commander, paid tribute to Hutchinson before an understandably emotional audience. "For all things there is a season and there is a time. God's reason for this event in this time may never be understood."



Pfc. Thomas Day

Capt. Michael Wisser, Company A, 2-502nd Infantry Regiment commander, speaks during a memorial ceremony for one of his soldiers, Spc. Ray Hutchinson.



Troops mourn soldier killed after returning home

Pfc. Chris Jones

A pair of Army dog tags hang from a rifle at the memorial ceremony of Sgt. 1st Class Eduard Fico, a signaler with Company B, 501st Signal Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) who was killed last week in a gas station in Augusta, Ga.. Fico served with the 101st in Iraq for eight months before returning to the United States to enroll in Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course.

By Pfc. Chris Jones
40th PAD

MOSUL, Iraq -- After seeing eight months of violence in Iraq, Sgt. 1st Class Eduard Fico returned to his home in Georgia, where violence lurked in his shadow.

The signaler with the 501st Signal Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) went uninjured throughout the war and peace-keeping missions in Iraq, only to lose his life at an auto repair shop in Augusta, Ga., after returning home to enroll in Senior Noncommissioned Officer Course at Fort Gordon, the nearby Army base and home to the Signal Corps.

Last Sunday, Fico, the veteran of two combat operations, Operation Desert Hope in Somalia and Operation Iraqi Freedom, was stabbed to death after being robbed by, according to law enforcement authorities, two suspects he met at a bar earlier in the night.

News of his death quickly streamed overseas, leaving shockwaves in many soldiers in his unit, stationed in Mosul and several outlying cities in Northern Iraq.

A memorial ceremony was held Sunday for Fico at a chapel in the Division Rear compound in Mosul, where his commander, Capt. Brian North, took upon himself the daunting task of summarizing a soldier's life in a five-minute speech.

From Fico's enlistment into the Army July 22, 1988, to his first duty assignment at Fort Drum, N.Y., North revealed. From Fico's tour in Germany and recruiting position in Wisconsin, North revealed. From Fico's responsibilities at Fort Carson, Colo., to his accomplishments at South Korea, North revealed.

At last, he told of Fico's trek to Fort Campbell, Ky., where he would join the 501st and deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. And suddenly North's account came to an end.

"I'll miss you," North finished, a tear falling over his chin.

Fico is survived by his wife, Anita, and two children, Nathan and Charlene.

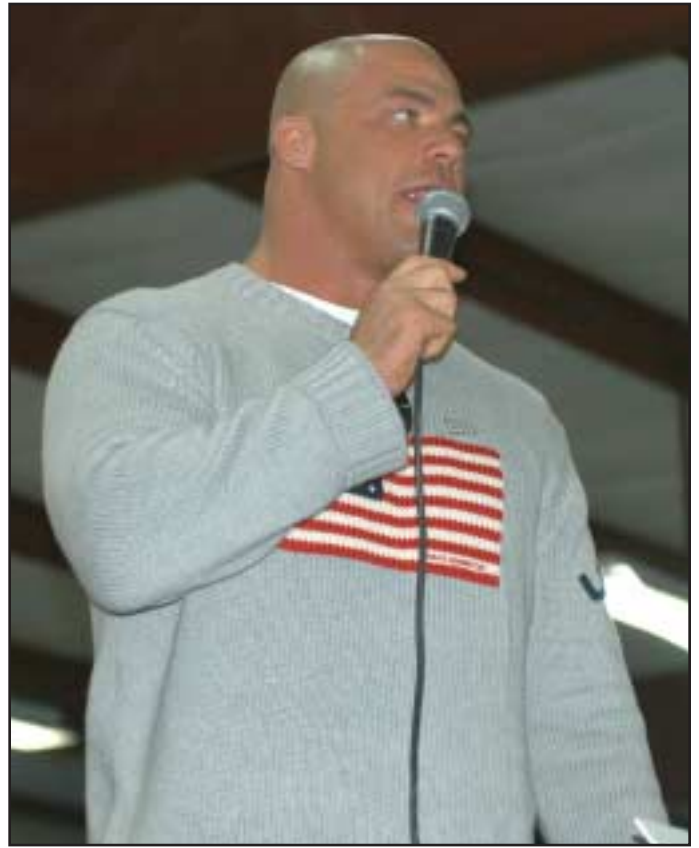


Bring on the entertainment
USO brings stars to the troops



photos by Spc. Joshua M. Risner

(Above) Gen. Richard S. Meyers, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, speaks to the 101st. "It is because of you that Iraqis have a chance for freedom," he said. "And it's because of you that we've rounded up all these folks to include the big man, Saddam Hussein." Meyers also participated in an awards ceremony, where he pinned several soldiers. (Below) Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) announces the special guests as Meyers looks on. (Left) Leeann Tweeden, a sportscaster for Fox Sports, says a few words to the troops. "If it wasn't for what you guys and girls are doing today, if not for what those have done before you, we wouldn't have the opportunities that we have today," she said. "What you guys have done is incredible."



Photos by Spc. Joshua M. Risner

(Top Left) Mike Wallace of NASCAR fame, speaks out. "I'd like to thank each and every one of you for allowing us to enjoy our freedoms at home," he said. (Top Right) Kurt Angle, superstar of World Wrestling Entertainment, said to the soldiers: "You guys are the ones that make this country the number one country in the world. We're the kind of country that doesn't back down, that doesn't lose... it's true, it's damn true." (Above) Robin Williams is up to his usual antics, pictured here tossing t-shirts into the crowd. He would later throw his own shirt to one "lucky" soldier. Thankfully, Mr. Williams put on another shirt afterwards.

101st donates more than 230 computers to Mosul City Hall

By Pfc. Chris Jones
40th PAD

MOSUL, Iraq -- A 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) program to provide computers to the employees of Mosul City Hall made its final contribution Thursday, bringing the total number of computers donated to more than 230.

The project has been in effect since September, and the last of the 233 computers were installed Thursday by Chief Warrant Officer Carrie McLeish and Master Sgt. Paul Franks, automation technicians for the division's G-6 office. The team has been in charge of installing new computers and the Internet on several buildings in Northern Iraq, including the University of Mosul and the Oil Ministry of Nineveh Province. Coalition Forces have spent more than \$150,000 on the project.

Every computer in Mosul City Hall donated by the 101st was also hooked to the Internet, offering better global communication than the workforce there has ever had access to. The project consequently will also allow Coalition Forces, as well as leaders from smaller cities and villages outside Mosul, to communicate with the governor of Nineveh Province, Ghanim al-Basso, whose office is in the city headquarters.

"This will allow Coalition Forces to communicate with the governor of Nineveh, and it also allows the governor to communicate with citizens outside Mosul," McLeish said.

Soldiers also installed Microsoft XP and Office XP to each computer.

"Microsoft XP is a lot better than [Microsoft 2000] in its Arabic translation," McLeish said, "so it's pretty useful to a lot of the workers here."

Concurrent with the donation of computers and software, soldiers have also been training a group of Iraqi citizens to maintain the computer system after the division redeploys. McLeish said the three main targets for training are web page upkeep, basic computer skills and networking proficiency.

"We want to educate people on what Coalition Forces are doing here in Iraq," McLeish said. "We want to stop misinformation about what our goals are here and provide Iraqis with a bigger picture. This is a big step."



Pfc. Chris Jones

Master Sgt. Paul Franks (left) and Chief Warrant Officer Carrie McLeish, automation technicians for G-6, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), finish installing a networking system on a computer at Mosul City Hall Thursday morning. More than 130 computers were donated to the facility by Coalition Forces.

Communication underway in Iraq

by Pfc. Chris Jones
40th PAD

MOSUL, Iraq -- Leaders throughout Northern Iraq assembled in Mosul Saturday morning to discuss the advancements in telecommunication made between the joint efforts of Coalition Forces and Iraqi citizens, and to develop a regional strategy for the next phase of communications.

Iraq's two largest cities, Mosul and Baghdad, each had representatives -- various signal officers of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) spoke on behalf of Mosul, while Baghdad was represented by Col. Tom Catudal, chief telecommunication adviser to Paul Bremer, Coalition Provisional Authority civilian administrator. Telecommunication experts from Dohuk, Kirkuk and Irbil were among the other major players in the summit.

"I think you all know that telecommunication in Northern Iraq has really led the way for the rest of Iraq," said Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, 101st commander.

"The accomplishments here really have been extraordinary."

Communications ranks second on Petraeus' project funding list, having spent nearly four million dollars on such acts as restoring phone lines, donating computers and telephones, and purchasing new equipment from the United States. Only reconstruction efforts to schools have taken more Coalition capital than communications advancements in Northern Iraq, said Lt. Col. Welton Chase, Jr., 101st signal officer and commander of the 501st Signal Battalion.

The 101st Airborne Division has already completed 31 major communications projects in Northern Iraq, including its donation of 212 computers to the Mosul University, an act which cost \$99,790. The division is also responsible for 11 new Internet cafes for the use of Iraqi citizens and the complete reconstruction of several post offices in the Nineveh Province.

Thirty-two long-term communications projects are still in effect for the 101st, as well as 21 short-term projects, Chase said.

"We've had a lot of projects completed already, and we've done so through relatively little investment," Petraeus said,

noting that many U.S. businesses, such as ATT and Bell South, have helped Coalition Forces by donating optic fiber to repair telephone lines, therefore helping to maintain a reasonable budget throughout reconstruction efforts. "What has made all of our success here isn't just the dollars -- it's not the even the donations -- it's really the initiative that [Coalition Forces and Iraqi citizens] together have demonstrated."

Petraeus led the meeting by explaining the progress and the hindrances that have faced his soldiers throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom, then exchanged his ideas for the future of communication in Iraq with the handful of Iraqi telecommunication directors representing various cities in Nineveh Province.

"Our vision for Northern Iraq is a very modern region in which people from many different ethnicities, tribes and religions work together, do business with each other, and they are all supported and enabled by a first-rate telecommunications system," Petraeus said.

"Signalers" of the 101st are presently

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Pfc. Chris Jones

Lt. Col. Welton Chase, Jr. (left), commander, 501st Signal Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), speaks to an assembly of telecommunication leaders from around Iraq, including Col. Tom Catudal (second to left), chief telecommunication advisor to Paul Bremer, Coalition Provisional Authority civilian administrator. The group exchanged ideas for improving telecommunication for citizens of Northern Iraq.

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“You make things happen by being on the offensive,” said Hickey, a Chicago native. “That’s allowed us to gather large amounts of information. We’re not passive; we’re very aggressive.”

Confident that the ousted dictator was never too far from Hussein’s hometown of Tikrit, Maj. Gen. Ray Odierno, commander of the 4th Infantry Division, said he felt information would finally surface that would lead to Saddam’s whereabouts.

“We tried to work through family and tribal ties that might have been close to Saddam Hussein,” Odierno said. It was a tip from someone inside the dictator’s secret circle that eventually led a group of 600 soldiers from various units to a rustic, mud-brick hut and the manmade hole in the ground, where the famous fugitive finally was discovered huddled with a pistol and \$750,000 in American bills. Hussein had eluded coalition forces since the war began March 21.

Compared to the palatial complex Saddam had built just 10 miles north in Tikrit, the hideaway was sparse. Soldiers discovered a one-room hut barely large enough to house a twin bed. A rickety lean-to outside had been converted into a disheveled kitchen.

Hickey said his brigade, as well as other units, have conducted more than 500 raids in the Task Force Ironhorse area during the last eight months – some even along the stretch of rural farmland in Ad Dawr where the former Iraqi leader eventually was discovered.

Though he never spoke directly to the man his brigade sought for so long, Hickey said he was aware of what the event meant to the coalition and the Iraqi people. “At that moment, I felt a great sense of accomplishment because I know the work the soldiers had done,” he said.

Editor’s note: Army Staff Sgt. David Bennett is assigned to the 367th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.)

101st units named best in aviation

The Ellis Parker Awards in aviation winners have been announced.

1st Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment was selected as the winner in the Combat category and 9th Bn., 101st Avn. was the winner in the Combat Support category.

Additionally, 9-101 was the overall winner for the entire Army in all categories for Unit of the Year.

Other winner were 421st Medevac Bn from Wiesbaden (but also deployed) was winner of the Combat Service Support unit of the year and 1-123 Aviation was winner of the TDA Unit of the Year.

The Ellis Parker Awards will be presented during the Aviation Conference in the last week of January.

The Judge Says...**Items of legal interest to soldiers**

Q: What is bankruptcy? Will it help me or hurt my credit?

A: *Bankruptcy is legal protection from your creditors.*

Normally, a contract defines the duties and responsibilities between a borrower and a lender. Bankruptcy, however, can require a lender to accept a lower payment or eliminate the debt entirely.

Two different types of bankruptcy are available to individuals. The first is Chapter 7, often called a “straight” bankruptcy. Under Chapter 7, all nonexempt assets are applied to all debts, and the debts are eliminated. For example, \$5,000 in assets might be applied to \$30,000 in debts, and the other \$25,000 is cancelled.

The second is Chapter 13, often called a “reorganization” bankruptcy. Under Chapter 13, the court approves a 3-5 year repayment plan which the creditors must accept. Some people claim Chapter 13 is less damaging to your credit than Chapter 7, because debts are repaid and not discharged.

Bankruptcy can be expensive though, and not all debts can be discharged (such as child support arrearages). Consult with an attorney if you are having diffi-

culty paying your bills and you think bankruptcy is an option.

Q: Can I be punished for bankruptcy?

A: *Soldiers are required by AR 600-15 to pay their just debts, and can be punished under Article 134, UCMJ, for dishonorably failing to pay a debt.*

Soldiers cannot be punished for filing for bankruptcy, however. Bankruptcy is a perfectly legal proceeding, and soldiers cannot be prosecuted for seeking protection from their creditors.

Preventive law tip of the week:

Don’t borrow more than you can repay. That sounds like common sense advice, but aside from extraordinary circumstances, bankruptcy only becomes a consideration when you have borrowed beyond your ability to repay.

So when it comes to consumer debt, avoid the temptation to take on a new line of credit or carry a large balance on an account. Some purchases such as houses or vehicles virtually require buying on credit, so reduce your borrowing elsewhere.

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involved in dozens of missions across Northern Iraq, including acquiring a modern cable splicing machine from the United States, a purchase of approximately \$42,000, said Maj. Jim Enicks, division communications officer. Currently, many Iraqis mend frayed telephone cables by hand.

Coalition Forces have also been active in getting Iraqi children online, working with computers, a goal which would improve both education and communications in Iraq. After opening the Scientific Club, a computer and Internet lab for children in primary and secondary school, to significant success, the 101st now plans to provide 17 new computers.

At the conference, Chase stressed to the Iraqis on-hand that when much of the 101st redeploys in February back to the U.S., the ensuing team of Coalition Forces in the area would help add to the success already made.

“All of you know that the Coalition Forces here are transitioning,” Chase said, “but we have great soldiers coming, and they will not leave our support. They will continue the process we’ve started toward a better Iraq.”

Man on the Street

What will Saddam's capture mean for Iraq?



"I think it will show the people of Iraq that we're dedicated to securing their freedom."

- Spc. Tysen Yates of Cartersville, Ill., Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 501st Signal Battalion



"It's a symbol that one man who was such a powerful person was really just an ordinary man."

- Sgt. Claudia Tapia of Houston, Texas, HHC 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

"It's a beginning to start a new country without fear of persecution."

- Staff Sgt. John Hall of Franklin, Ohio, HHC 501st Signal Bn.



"I do believe it's going to help the process of rebuilding the country."

- Mike Williams of Clarksville, Tenn., Command Safety Office



"It will prove to the people of Iraq that he is mortal and that they will venture into new activities without fear."

- Capt. Elizabeth Scioletti of New Hyde Park, N.Y., 37th Engineer Bn.



"It will give them more freedom."

- Spc. Bobby Ray England of Iaeger, W.V., 37th Engineer Bn.