

# TASKFORCE GETS SADDAM

Story by Staff Sgt. David Bennett

AD DAWR, Iraq – The final chapter in Saddam Hussein’s apprehension is a story of patience and persistence for members of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and Task Force Ironhorse.

“It feels good,” said Spc. Michael Tillery, a 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 42<sup>nd</sup> 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 Hussein – code-named



Photo by Staff Sgt. David Bennett

A member of 1st Brigade Combat Team lifts a styrofoam lid covering the hole that former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was discovered hiding.



Photo by Staff Sgt. David Bennett

This makeshift kitchen is where Hussein probably ate his last meal before his Dec. 13 capture in the village of Ad Dawr.

Operation Red Dawn – was an exercise in tenacious planning and determination, said Col. James Hickey, commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team, which spearheaded the operation.

“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 his hometown of Tikrit, Maj. Gen. Ray Odierno, commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, said he felt that information would finally surface that would lead to Hussein’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 the group of 600 soldiers from various units to a rustic mud brick hut and the manmade hole in the ground, where the famous fugitive was finally discovered huddled with a pistol and \$750,000 in American bills. Hussein had eluded Coalition forces since the war began March 21, 2003.

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 was discovered.

Though he never spoke directly to the man that 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 have done,” he said.

