

## Homeless vets cut in / Former fighters thankful for second chance do yardwork to help Ogden soldier in Iraq

By **JaNAE FRANCIS**

OGDEN -- When a soldier in Iraq was facing possible city tickets for weed growth at his home, it was the Ogden Homeless Veterans Fellowship that stepped in to help.

A handful of veterans participated in three cleanup efforts at the home of Army Sgt. Sam Mendoza, with the 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, N.Y., who was recently divorced during his 15-month deployment and who has no family in the area.

Tuesday was the third time the veterans worked at Mendoza's home on the 200 North block of 360 West. They plan to return for more yardwork this month.

"He's a vet and he's going through some hard times," said Milt Frodsham, an Ogden native. "We're here to do a little 'God' work."

The Army veteran said he's been living at the Ogden Homeless Veterans Fellowship for a few months.

"It's good for me," Frodsham said of the fellowship.

"I had a drinking problem. I was in jail. I had no wife, no family, no job. They helped me find one job. I was laid off Friday. They will help me find another one."

The Ogden Homeless Veterans Fellowship is a 32-bed facility that offers veterans a place to live and receive counseling and other assistance, with the goal of making vets self-sufficient in 18 months.

The three veterans who helped at the home Tuesday were volunteering their time.

Fellowship director Jeff Kane said the United Way of Northern Utah provides funding for projects that take the veterans out into the community to provide service.

"It's therapeutic for them just to help other people in and of itself," said Bobi Pace, a clinical therapist at the facility.

"It's a good opportunity for them to give back to the community. They are grateful for all the help they receive. It's a good way to give back."

Fellowship residents showed up in large numbers Sept. 19 to help with Your Community Connection's Real Men Can Cook fundraising event, she said.

All three of the veterans who worked on the Ogden home Tuesday fought in Vietnam.



Tuesday, Clint Jolley, originally from Salt Lake City, donned a T-shirt reading "Freedom is not free" as he chopped down small trash trees and removed weeds.

The Marine Corps veteran said he likes helping the man serving in Iraq.

"He's over there, and there's nobody over here to help him out," Jolley said. "Veterans helping other veterans -- that's how I see it."

Barry Gilmer, an Army vet originally from Georgia, agrees, saying, "Vets got to take care of vets."

"This is our way of thanking him for what he's doing. What he's doing is a little more serious than a couple of hours out of our day."

Mendoza's mother, Lilia Mendoza, of Redlands, Calif., calls the volunteer effort "a wonderful thing."

Because she lives 13 hours away, she said her efforts to help out her son are limited.

She and her family did some cleanup of the home's interior and exterior this summer when they were in town for a wedding, but they could not afford to return when they got notice of the pending cleanup tickets.

"What can he do?" she said. "He's over there."