



# The Freedom Post

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## Blackhorse Takes the Reins in Mosul



Soldiers of Task Force Freedom(TFF) present colors behind Brig. Gen. Kevin J. Bergner, incoming TFF Commander, during the Transfer of Authority ceremony held Saturday, February 19 at Mosul Air Field. (photo by Sgt. Richard Way)

Soldiers gathered at Forward Operating Base Diamondback in Mosul, Iraq, Saturday for a Transfer of Authority ceremony honoring Task Force Olympia's service and inducting Task Force Freedom to continue the mission in Mosul.

"The success of Task Force Olympia was absolutely extraordinary...over 10,000 successful missions, no other force in the world could have done that," said Lt. Gen. John R. Vines, Multi-National Corps Iraq Commanding General.

For the next rotation, Task Force Freedom from Ft. Irwin, CA, will train Iraqi Forces to take the

lead in securing a democratic Iraq from religious extremist groups and terrorists.

"Task Force Olympia has set the stage for success of the mission by Task Force Freedom. Now Task Force Freedom will follow through to turn that dream into a reality," said Lt. Col. Andre Hance, Task Force Freedom Public Affairs Officer. "They have given hope to the Iraqi people for a bright future. Task Force Freedom will continue this mission."

Brig. Gen. Kevin J. Bergner took command of Task Force Freedom as Brig. Gen. Carter F. Ham left a legacy of success.

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## Q and A with the Command Sergeant Major

Story by Sgt. Daniel Lucas



The individual who has the most influence on the enlisted Soldiers of Task Force Freedom found a moment for an interview. He was honest and direct. The most senior enlisted person among many experienced professionals, he is Command Sergeant Major Ricky Pring, Task Force Freedom Command Sergeant Major.

Q: How do you think Task Force Freedom will be different from Task Force Olympia?

A: I think Task Force Olympia did everything very well and accomplished a lot of great things, (proven by the elections) and I think TF Blackhorse will continue to perform superbly. However, our focus is going to change. We are becoming a division headquarters and will be focused on training the Iraqi police force, the border police, and the Iraqi Army.

Q: How big of an impact will training these forces have?

A: Our success with training Iraqi forces will lead to a draw down of our own Soldiers. This will keep Soldiers that have had two or three tours from returning. If you look back in history, Iraq was a wealthy country. They exported fruits and vegetables as well as oil, and these have been dragged down by 50 years of dictatorship. When you look at the people, the majority of them just want to get along. They are just normal people, just like us. We are helping people so they can send their kids to schools, practice their religion, and just get back on their feet.

Q: Are TF Blackhorse Soldiers ready to take the reins in Iraq?

A: The Soldiers are ready. The difference between TF Blackhorse



Soldiers and a lot of other units is that TF Blackhorse is an Opposing Force (OPFOR) unit back at Ft. Irwin. We role played the Iraqi forces there training other units. We had Iraqi US citizens to help teach our Soldiers about the culture. I also have guys in key leadership positions that have been to Iraq before so they knew about the [improvised explosive devices] and the threat of the Anti-Iraqi Forces. We also did a lot of convoy operations training and were able to gather data from other units that were over here at the time. My junior leaders didn't have a lot of experience so they didn't have a lot of bad habits to break before getting over here. We were fortunate to have six months of good training before we were deployed.

Q: What about the rest of the Soldiers of TF Freedom?

A: All of the Soldiers are very well prepared. There is no "I" in team, as I like to say. Task Force Freedom includes all units, absolutely everybody. The Stryker units, for example, are responsible for offensive operations and allow units like civil affairs and public

affairs to do their jobs. If any one element of the task force fails, then we all fail.

Q: So this isn't the first time you have been deployed over here?

A: This is the third time I have been deployed to Iraq. The first time I was here was during Desert Storm and I spent seven months in the Iraqi Desert. The second time was during Operation Iraqi Freedom I and I was in Baghdad.

Q: Is there anything you would like to tell the Soldiers who haven't had the experience you have?

A: This is probably one of the hardest but most rewarding experiences these Soldiers are going to have of their lives. The stuff we are doing here now will be in every history book in the world. Our success is inevitable and the history books will show democracy won over tyranny. Their children and grandchildren are going to talk about this great time in history and ask the Soldiers about what it was like. My daughter, when she was in high school, did a report about Desert Storm and interviewed me about what it was like. Every Soldier in the Task Force needs to be proud of what they are doing every day. The opportunity to see these Soldiers doing what they do is the highlight of my day.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to add?

A: When I was in Desert Storm back in 91', I thought the Army was the best it could ever be. Since then, I have been proved wrong. These Soldiers, this Army, is the best Army I have ever served with in my 27 years of service.

# CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

PLEASE JOIN US AT THE CHAPEL FOR  
FOB FREEDOM RELIGIOUS SERVICES:

Catholic Mass	1100 Saturday
Latter-Day Saint	0830 Sunday
Gospel	1300 Sunday
Protestant	1100 Sunday
	2000 Sunday
	1930 Wednesday

### Words for the Week:

Sometimes we forget this simple truth: The broken pieces of ourselves are often our greatest teachers. It is from them that we learn our strength. It is from them that we learn compassion, wisdom and understanding, devotion, faith, and insight. It is from them that we learn how to pray, how to cry, how to listen, how to reach out for help. It is from them that we learn how to strive for better, how to emphasize and offer help.

- Unknown

## WELCOME TO MOSUL, TASK FORCE FREEDOM



Command Sergeant Major Pring poses with the 94th Engineer Battalion mascot, the Wolverine. (photo by Spc. David Nunn)



**Above:** Brig. Gen. Carter Ham and Brig. Gen. Kevin Bergner during the Transfer of Authority ceremony. (photo by Spc. David Nunn)

**Below:** Colonel Robert Brown, 1/25 Commander bows his head for the invocation during the Ceremony Saturday. (photo by Sgt. Richard Way)



# Deployed Soldiers Read to their Children at Home



Capt. Russel Nunley reads a book to his 8-month-old son, Jack, for a video to be sent home. (picture by Spc. David Nunn)

The sound of a parent's voice to a child is precious, and with the aid of The Family Literacy Foundation a soldier is able to read his child a bedtime story from 9000 miles away.

A smiling soldier sits comfortably in a chair in front of a small video camera, surrounded by stuffed animals and framed by bookshelves packed with books, as he reads from a large children's book at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Endurance in Quarrah-West, Iraq.

Soldiers of the 2-8<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery (FA) Company, currently deployed on FOB Endurance in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from Fort Lewis, WA., discovered a way to stay connected with their young children back home through a unique book reading program sponsored by the Post Chapel. The 2-8 FA is

the first Army unit to take advantage of the program funded by the Family Literacy Foundation, a non-profit organization who originally catered to only Navy and Marine families for the last 15 years.

"I was introduced to the program through a mother in the unit a few weeks before our mobilization in late October," said Capt. Randy Curry, Chaplain of FOB Endurance. "Since we started the program we have had 35 soldiers send recordings and books home to loved ones."

The 2-8 FA has received a huge response from home too, as their family support group has used this program as a way to enable friends to help deployed soldiers and their families.

"In addition to buying new books, some families have helped us by cleaning out their kid's old bookshelves and send-

ing them in care packages," said Curry. "It is such a neat program to help keep families together through a deployment, but it is truly people driven."

According to their website, [www.read2kids.com](http://www.read2kids.com), The Family Literacy Foundation's mission is to facilitate supportive relationships for children through family and friends reading aloud with them. An underway quality of life program for military families, helps keep parents and children connected during disconnected times of deployment through reading aloud to videotapes.

"This program makes it a lot easier for everyone to be apart of our children's lives while we are here in Iraq," said Capt. Russel Nunley, the Signal Officer for the 2-8<sup>th</sup> FA. "It is truly a great opportunity to be able to read these books to our kids while they see our faces and hear our voices, and even be able to mail the same books to them in the same package."

All deployed personnel can utilize this program as they choose, not only to read to children but also to younger brothers or sisters, grandchildren, or even a child they are mentoring.

"I loved the interaction of my child with the video the most, it was incredible to watch his eyes light up, he started smiling and before we knew it, my son was talking back to the video as if his daddy was in the room with him, it was great!" wrote a deployed soldier to the

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foundation. According to Curry, the program also allowed members of the family support group, friends of deployed Soldiers and even interested citizens from the unit's home area a way to help brighten the year a soldier and his family is apart.

"Our family support group back home has even built a list of who had kids, their age groups, and sent the information to interested people that would like to help," said Curry.

In the end, great programs like these give Americans back home the ability to help aid those involved with this war, even if they don't agree with why we are here.

"No matter your stance on this war, this is a really good opportunity for everyone to help our Soldiers during a deployment," said Curry. "Through this program, soldiers can come back in a year and it won't be just some stranger – this is especially important for the little ones and new births."

(story by Spc. David Nunn)

## Pictures of the Week:

**Right:** Lt. Gen John R. Vines walks with Brig. Gen. Ham, Task Force Olympia Commander, who waves as he prepares to leave the theater. (photo by Spc. David Nunn) **Below:** General Ham poses with members of his team before taking off. (photo Sgt. Richard Way)



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# Dr. T's Medical Matters

This is the second half of an article on battle fatigue. In part one of this article, we discussed the history and the signs and symptoms of battle fatigue. In this edition of "Dr. T's Medical Matters", we'll discuss the prevention and treatment of battle fatigue.

Stress, and more specifically, stress in a combat environment, is not a bad thing. Sometimes it's what makes us run a little faster, jump a little higher or perform one notch above our norm. It's when the stressors are too overwhelming to our system that it leads to negative effects.

Prevention and Control of stress is the responsibility of the Chain of Command. FM 22-51, Leaders' Manual for Combat Stress Control, clearly identifies steps leaders can take to identify and reduce stressors within their unit. We know statistically that having faith, a sense of purpose and unit cohesion are all qualities that reduce stress in a unit. It is the responsibility of the battle buddy and the Chain of Command to identify soldiers who are being overcome by stress.

Listening is the first step in understanding and helping a Soldier who is experiencing battle fatigue. At the unit level, acknowledging the Soldier's stressors and concerns is the first step to helping him/her. A temporary change in jobs, a call to a loved one, or a good nights rest are simple things that can be done at

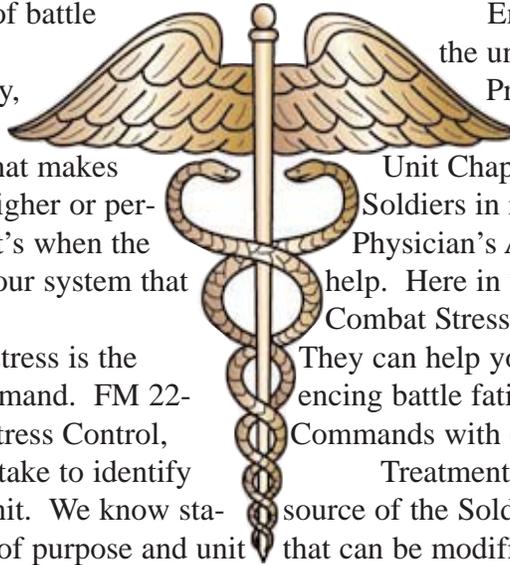
the unit level. There are times when immediate referral to a specialist is needed. If the Soldier talks about hurting him/herself or others, it is cause for immediate referral within the health care system.

Encouraging the Soldier to speak to the unit Chaplain, to a Health Care Professional or to the Combat Stress Control Team are all good options.

Unit Chaplains are great listeners and can aid Soldiers in reducing stress. Physicians and Physician's Assistants (PAs) are also a source of help. Here in this AO, we have members of the Combat Stress Control Team on most of the FOBs. They can help you and your Soldiers who are experiencing battle fatigue. They can also provide Commands with education and debriefings as needed.

Treatment consists of understanding the source of the Soldiers stressor and modifying those that can be modified. Helping the Soldier understand the source of their stressors is sometimes all that is needed. If necessary, a respite from these stressors can be arranged. Medications are rarely required but can also be provided.

Stress in a combat environment is a real entity. What is a source of "good" stress for one Soldier can be the source of "bad" stress for another Soldier. If you see yourself or your buddy showing signs of battle fatigue, get help and talk to someone.



*Rocking you from the Tigris to the Euphrates.*

PLEASE E-MAIL YOUR REQUESTS TO [blackhorse@tffpao.org](mailto:blackhorse@tffpao.org)

# Headlines From the Other Side of the World

## It's Finders-Keepers After Woman finds Winning Lottery Ticket -

Shelbyville, Ind. The ticket was thrown away after a cafe worker said it wasn't a winner. Karrie Jeremiah fished the Indiana lottery ticket out of the trash at a restaurant. It was a winner, worth \$100,000.

## Five-minute penalty for convicted killer-

Ann-Marie Engelbracht, convicted of killing her husband, Jaco, was sentenced on Friday to be detained for five minutes. In passing sentence, Judge Kathy Satchwell ordered that Engelbrecht be "detained until the rising of the court" for tea. In a long, detailed explanation, Stachwell said that Engelbrecht served her sentence in advance

as "none of us will ever know or comprehend her suffering over the years." Satchwell pointed out that Engelbrecht's husband had been a control freak with a history of physical and alcohol abuse.

## Man Throws Lit Cigarette out Window, Sets SUV Ablaze-

San Francisco, Ca., a 20-year-old man barely escaped serious injury Thursday after a lit cigarette he tried to toss out the window while driving across the Bay Bridge blew back in and ignited the vehicle, according to the California Highway Patrol.

## Sports Shorts

### Jeff Gordon wins third Daytona 500

Gordon grabbed the lead from Earnhardt three laps from the scheduled end, then held off Kurt Busch and Earnhardt in extra laps on Sunday to become only the fifth driver to win three Daytonas. It was one of the wildest finishes in the 47-year history of NASCAR's biggest race. There were four lead changes in the last nine laps and two crashes involving a total of 17 cars in the last 20 laps.

### Virginia Tech 67, (7) Duke 65

BLACKSBURG, Va. -- Zabian Dowdell's three-pointer with 14.6 seconds left lifted the Virginia Tech Hokies to a 67-65 win over the seventh-ranked Duke Blue Devils at Cassell Coliseum.

### Arizona 92, Oregon 67

TUCSON, Ariz. -- Salim Stoudamire posted a game-high 22 points and Channing Frye added 19 points and seven blocked shots, as 10th-ranked Arizona pounded Oregon, 92-67, at the McKale Center. Hassan Adams posted 17 points for the Wildcats (22-4, 12-2 Pac-10), who have won five straight and 10 of their last 11 contests.

### Louisville 64, Marquette 61

MILWAUKEE -- Francisco Garcia's three-pointer with 2.6 seconds remaining capped a late comeback as Louisville downed Marquette, 64-61, in a wild Conference USA affair at the Bradley Center.

## 7-Day Forecast for Mosul

<b>Mon</b> Feb 21	 Partly Cloudy	63.0°/37.0°	20%
<b>Tue</b> Feb 22	 Partly Cloudy	64.0°/37.0°	0%
<b>Wed</b> Feb 23	 Partly Cloudy	63.0°/39.0°	10%
<b>Thu</b> Feb 24	 Partly Cloudy	65.0°/40.0°	20%
<b>Fri</b> Feb 25	 Few Showers	65.0°/44.0°	30%
<b>Sat</b> Feb 26	 Few Showers	65.0°/38.0°	30%
<b>Sun</b> Feb 27	 Partly Cloudy	65.0°/38.0°	10%

To submit photos to The Freedom Post, email them as a JPEG or PDF file to [blackhorse@tff-pao.org](mailto:blackhorse@tff-pao.org).

## Shout-outs Bring Soldiers' Faces Home by way of NASCAR



Soldiers of the 3-21 Stryker Brigade Combat Team salute the camera for a shout-out aired during the National Anthem before the Daytona 500. (photo by Sgt. Richard Way)

Late at night at Forward Operating Base Freedom, Soldiers of the 3-21 Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) prepared themselves for another mission; a one-of-a-kind message home that aired during Vanessa Williams' rendition of the National Anthem during the opening ceremony of the Daytona 500.

Outside Task Force Freedom Headquarters last night, C Co., 3-21 SBCT, sent a shout-out to the Daytona 500.

"It's nice knowing I could be on national television this far from home," said Pvt. 1st Class Paul J. Watson of C Co., 3-21 Infantry Battalion, SBCT, "It's heartwarming."

Sgt. 1st. Class Lance Milsted, Broadcast Journalist for the 366th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment (MPAD), runs the Digital Video Imaging Distribution System (DVIDS) for Task Force Freedom in Mosul. "We got a call from LA for a live feed," said Milsted, "Once we filmed, everyone ran inside to see themselves on TV."

The Soldiers filled the broadcast room of the 366th MPAD to watch themselves on television at 10:00 pm. last night.

"I know how hard these guys work, it gives them a distraction and brings them a little bit of joy to call home and tell their families they're on television," said Milsted, "It's our honor to do this for them."

The biggest NASCAR fan among the Soldiers was Sgt. Patrick Huntley from Tacoma, Washington, who named his son after NASCAR racer, Sterling Marlin.

Huntley called his wife as soon as he knew he would be on television. "She said that she was going to record it, rewind it, and pause it to stare at him," said Huntley.

Watson stayed to watch the race and root for #6, Mark Martin who he said started out 34th and is now 7th.

Many soldiers have been fortunate enough to send messages home through DVIDS. Milsted said that the 366th MPAD has sent 50 shout-outs through the DVIDS system since they arrived here in January.

"I only wish they all were on national television shouting out to their families," said Milsted. (story by Staff Sgt. Michele Uitermarkt)

