



Coalition readies for month-long Islamic holiday

Maj. Angela Hildebrant

MNC-I PAO

Each year, more than 1 billion Muslims around the world celebrate Ramadan, the most sacred Islamic holiday, and this year's month-long observance happens from Oct. 5 to Nov. 4.

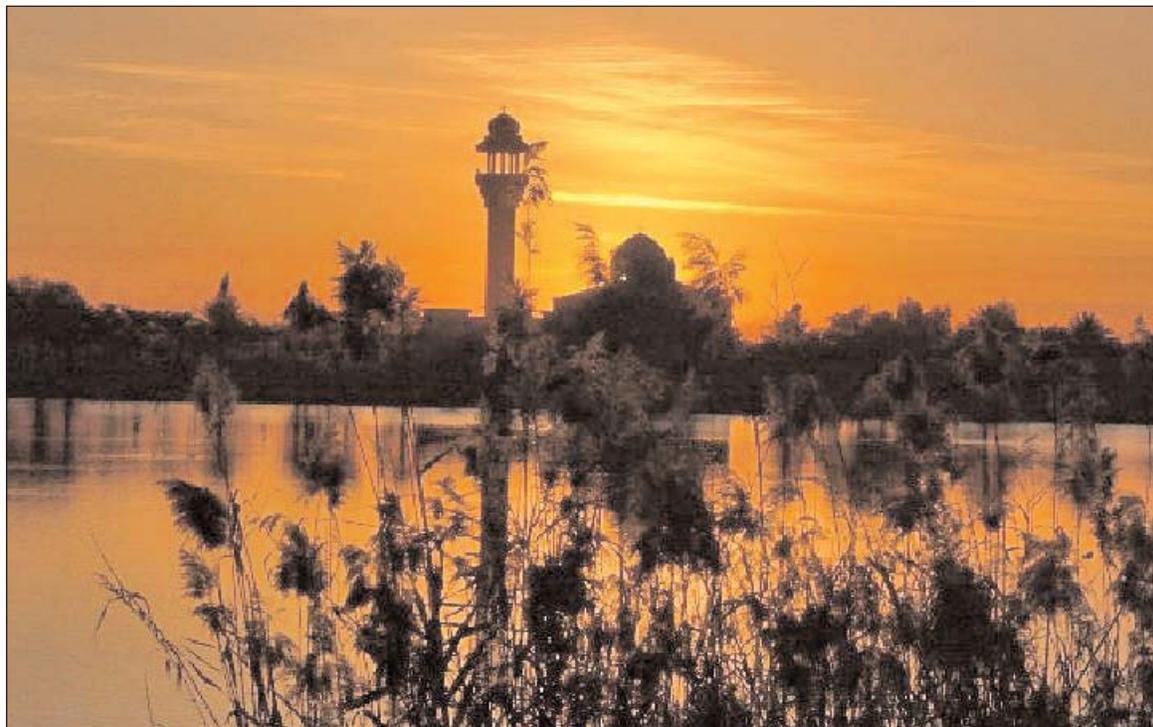
Coalition forces in Iraq, where Ramadan is observed as a national holiday, should learn the history, traditions and local customs of the holiday so they will be aware of and conscientious of what is customary behavior.

Ramadan celebrates the divine revelation of the holy Koran to the Muslim prophet Mohammed. Its start is determined by a local cleric and based on the lunar Islamic calendar. Because of this, Ramadan starts 11 days earlier each year, so in a Muslim's lifetime, the holiday will be observed during each season so that the obligation of fasting is evenly distributed between Muslims living in the northern and southern hemispheres.

The act of fasting, called Saum, is the third of the five pillars of Islam and is the most widely-practiced form of Muslim worship. According to Islamic beliefs, fasting denies the needs and pleasures of the body so that the spirit is conscious of and devoted to Allah, god of the Islamic faith.

Usually fasting entails no drinking, eating or sexual relations of any kind during the daylight hours during Ramadan. Fasting is also a way of shunning overindulgence, developing sympathy for the less fortunate and appreciating Allah's blessings.

The usual practice is to have a pre-fast meal, or suhoor, before dawn and a post-fast meal, iftar, after sunset. There are exceptions for the infirmed, nomadic travelers and women who are pregnant, nursing, or menstruating. It is also a time of intensive worship, reading of the Koran, giving charity, purifying personal behavior and doing good deeds. The Night of Honor and Dignity, Lailatul-Qadr, is the most



file photo

Each year, more than 1 billion Muslims around the world celebrate Ramadan, the most sacred Islamic holiday.

significant night of Ramadan. It commemorates the night the Koran was revealed to the prophet Mohammed.

Muslims believe the angel Gabriel visited Mohammed on Mount Hira outside of Mecca during a pilgrimage around A.D. 35. Lailatul-Qadr always occurs on one of the odd-numbered nights of the last ten days of Ramadan and will likely be celebrated Oct. 27. Muslims will spend this night asking Allah for forgiveness of their sins and reciting the Koran. Ramadan concludes with Eid-ul-Fitr, a three-day festival that marks the official end of the fasting period. The first day of Eid-ul-Fitr is comparable to the Christian celebration of Christmas in that celebrants decorate their homes, attend a special community prayer in the morning, give gifts and visit friends and relatives. Feuds or disputes, especially within families, are often settled.

Coalition forces and foreigners in Iraq should be aware of other traditions and sensitivities

of Muslims during Ramadan.

With respect to Islamic culture, non-Muslims should refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, lying or using profanity in the presence of Muslims during Ramadan.

It is also considered insensitive to cause a general disturbance in public, such as engaging in arguments, talking loudly, playing loud music or displaying vulgarity. Several activities and behaviors that are distinguishable during Ramadan will impact normal operations.

Some Iraqi forces and employees at coalition camps will be absent from work, and many who do report to work may appear fatigued and less attentive as a result of fasting.

This is a particular hazard for forces conducting patrols or providing security since some Iraqi drivers may be less mindful of their speed and general road safety.

Coalition forces conducting searches should be more watchful for potential enemy threats disguised as worshippers. More women will cover their heads and faces in the traditional hijab, so care-

ful scrutiny must be paid at checkpoints and points of entry into camps and sensitive areas.

It is also typical for larger groupings of Iraqis to convene for the sunset meal. There will be heavier traffic on roads after nightfall, and many drivers may be less cautious.

Celebratory gunfire has historically been more frequent during Ramadan, so troops should be vigilant in determining when to return fire. Muslims generally increase the number of visits to shrines and mosques, and many from around the world will make a pilgrimage to the Iraqi cities of Karbala and Najaf.

Universally, Ramadan should be viewed as a time when all people should be respectful of all religions, but Coalition forces in Iraq must still be on the alert for people who will see this period as a time to exploit vulnerabilities and plan attacks against Coalition forces and civilians.

(Editor's note: Information used in this article was obtained from www.islamicity.com and en.wikipedia.org.)

Keeping troops safe: Little robot, big mission

Pfc. Matthew Clifton
MNC-I PAO

Technology has always played an important role in the success of the U.S. military, and the introduction of the multi-function agile radio-controlled robot, "MARC-BOT," is one piece of technology helping in the fight against improvised explosive devices in Iraq.

The MARCBOT is a system developed by the Department of Defense's Rapid Equipping Force in conjunction with Exponent Inc. which uses a camera attached to a robot with the purpose of seeking out, identifying and confirming possible IEDs, said Dr. Bill Cohen, engineering and science consultant, Exponent Inc., Menlo Park, Calif.

Cohen works directly with Soldiers to figure out what is the most cost-effective and quickest way to solve any particular problem.

"Anything technical or scientific that the Soldiers say they need, any capability gap they need filled or any tools they say they need, I provide them with," Cohen said. "It turned out that the MARCBOT

plays a bigger part in the IED fight than a lot of people had thought."

Designed to be small enough and mobile enough for a platoon-or-squad-size element, the MARCBOT was developed and tested in Iraq and therefore has a higher success rate than products that were tested elsewhere, Cohen said.

Testing products in the theater is very beneficial to the testing process in that all factors are considered.

If the project is tested in a controlled environment the full effect might not be achieved, Cohen said.

"There have been several cases where we had a suspected IED and were not comfortable going up there ourselves," said 2nd Lt. Brian James Duncan, platoon leader, 2nd Platoon, Company C, 612th Engineer Battalion, Ohio Army National Guard. "If the IED is large enough to take out our vehicles, we send the MARCBOT instead, because we don't want to risk the lives of the several Soldiers manning the vehicle."

There have also been cases when other pieces of equipment can't reach into places like drainage ditch-



courtesy photo

The MARCBOT is a mobile robot that enables troops to get a closer look at suspicious objects without putting themselves in dangerous situations.

es or underneath things like crosswalks.

"We can't always take every piece of equipment we have off-road, but we can take the MAR-

CBOT off-road," Duncan said. "Our vehicles have the potential to get stuck if we take them into too-

See **MARCBOT**, Page 3

Soldiers deliver school supplies to children in Baghdad

Story, photos by
Senior Airman Chawntain Sloan
MNC-I PAO

About 300 children at Baghdad Airport Primary School started the new school year off right Sept. 11 thanks to Multi-National

Corps - Iraq Soldiers at Camp Victory.

Soldiers from Alpha and Headquarters and Headquarters Companies, 2nd Battalion, 299th Infantry Regiment, Hawaii Army National Guard; and Alpha Company, 3rd Bn., 297th Inf. Rgt., Alaska ANG, teamed up to provide the first-

through seventh-grade children with school supplies like pens, pencils, paper and crayons.

Each child received their own personal care package -- complete with stuffed animal -- courtesy of Operation Iraqi Children, a stateside nonprofit organization cofounded by actor Gary Sinise and author Laura Hillenbrand.

OIC serves as a liaison, helping Soldiers provide Iraqi schools-in-need with school supply kits compiled by children, church groups and other organizations in the United States.

Ms. Ibrahim, the school principal, said she, as well as the teachers and students, were very thankful for the supplies.

"I told (the students) yesterday, 'The Americans are coming,' or I don't think we would have had as many show up," said Ibrahim.

Soldiers provide ongoing support not just to the school but to the village, said Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Odoardi, HHC, 2nd Bn., 299th Inf. Rgt. civil affairs noncommissioned officer.

"We have developed a strong relationship with this village," said Odoardi. "Our units patrol the village, and the civil affairs



Soldiers from Alpha and Headquarters and Headquarters Companies, 2nd Battalion, 299th Infantry Regiment, Hawaii Army National Guard; and Alpha Company, 3rd Bn., 297th Inf. Rgt., Alaska ANG, paid a special visit to about 300 children at Baghdad Airport Primary School in Baghdad Sept. 11. Each of the first through seventh grade children received an Operation Iraqi Freedom school supply kit that included pens, pencils, paper and crayons and got a chance to talk with the Soldiers and try on their gear.

See **SCHOOL**, Page 4

2005 Iraqi Democratic Election Information



IRAQ REFERENDUM AND ELECTION INFORMATION SPOTLIGHT

Referendum and Election Media guidance

Do:

1. Follow your Unit Public Affairs Office media advice
2. Be helpful and courteous to the media
3. Refer any media enquiries up the chain of command

DEMOCRATIC TIMELINE



MARCBOT

rough terrain, and that poses a whole new problem of exposing ourselves while we try to get the vehicle un-stuck."

There are also a lot of anti-personnel mines off of the road, which poses another risk with taking vehicles off-road, making the MARCBOT extremely useful in a variety of circumstances, Duncan continued.

"Say there was a suspicious looking bag 60 meters off of the road. It could be a bomb or a small weapons cache," Duncan explained. "Our best option is to send the MARCBOT out there to check it out. For all of these reasons I think the MARCBOT is a valuable piece of equipment for us to have."

The MARCBOT could also be an important tool for infantry and other units, Duncan continued.

"If units came upon a suspicious looking object, they could check it out with the MARCBOT.

It would save time for the Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams, because they wouldn't have to come out to confirm or deny the object. The MARCBOT could do that," Duncan said.

"It would be useful for the infantry because often they have to patrol streets and alleys that are too small to be navigated by vehicles," Duncan continued. "There are a lot of situations where EOD might not be able to go where the infantry goes.

"I can definitely see these robots having a much more instrumental role in this and the following years than they did at the beginning of the conflict, due to the fact that a lot of the IEDs are on the small secondary streets," Duncan added.

Thanks to the successful field testing of the MARCBOT, mass distribution of the latest model is scheduled for the end of this month.



Schedule

- Texans at Bengals
- Colts at Titans
- Seahawks at Redskins
- Lions at Buccaneers
- Broncos at Jaguars
- Chargers at Patriots
- Bills at Saints
- Rams at Giants
- Jets at Ravens
- Vikings at Falcons
- Eagles at Chiefs
- Cowboys at Raiders
- 49ers at Cardinals
- Packers at Panthers



SSG St.Clair



PFC Clifton



Mr. Barnes

This Week's Picks

Bengals	Bengals	Bengals
Colts	Colts	Colts
Seahawks	Seahawks	Seahawks
Lions	Lions	Buccaneers
Jaguars	Broncos	Jaguars
Patriots	Patriots	Patriots
Bills	Saints	Bills
Giants	Giants	Giants
Ravens	Ravens	Ravens
Vikings	Falcons	Falcons
Eagles	Eagles	Chiefs
Cowboys	Cowboys	Raiders
Cardinals	Cardinals	49ers
Panthers	Packers	Panthers

Week Three Bye Teams:

Browns, Bears, Dolphins, Steelers

Last Week's Results:	6 - 8	9 - 4	9 - 4
Overall:	21 - 25	23 - 22	23 - 22

Notes

Pfc. Clifton, who is tied for the lead after three weeks with the guest pickers, has been seen strutting around the public affairs office like he's the best thing since processed cheese, and to top it off, his precious Bengals are 3 - 0 and looking like serious contenders.

The guest pickers have continued their roller-coaster picking – remember the guy from week two who went 2 - 14? Seriously. Two and fourteen?

Staff Sgt. St.Clair, on the other hand, has fallen into a picking Sarlacc Pit and is being slowly digested over a thousand years. But what does that matter as long as Seattle keeps winning?

This week's guest picker is Aundrey Barnes, 54th Signal Battalion ITT Systems outside plant technician.

If you would like to be a guest picker, call 822-1414 or e-mail mark.st.clair@iraq.centcom.mil.

Camp Victory Post Office is offering extended hours to facilitate redeploying troops.

To take advantage of the extended hours, units will need to contact Sgt. 1st Class Bowie or Lt. Usher at 822-2934 or 822-2925.

The goal is for units to come as a group to mail items home to relieve crowding during normal operating hours.

Don't blow it...

call EOD.



STAY ALIVE

Voices of Victory: *What is the most important thing to remember in a combat zone, and why?*



"To keep your cool. If you're not careful you could get killed or get the person next to you killed.."

Pfc. Jeff Moore, driver,
Battery C, 3rd Battalion, 13th
Field Artillery, Fort Sill, Okla.



"Don't get complacent, because you might get killed."

Debi Black,
Saudi Naval Support,
Fort Polk, La.



"Discipline, because it keeps you from becoming complacent."

Martin Rademacher,
MCI security,
Mesquite, Nevada.

Operating Hours

Coalition Cafe

Breakfast 5:30 - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Dinner 5:30 - 8 p.m.
Midnight Dining 11 p.m. - 1 a.m.

Sports Oasis

Breakfast 5:30 - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Dinner 5:30 - 9 p.m.

Shopette

Open 24 Hours

Camp Liberty Post Exchange

Everyday 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Fitness Center

Open 24 Hours

Chapel (Bldg. 31)

Sunday:

Protestant Service 7 and 8:45 a.m.
Catholic Mass 10:30 a.m.
Gospel Service Noon
Mormon (LDS) 2 p.m.
Episcopal 4 p.m.
Full Life Service 6 p.m.

Saturday:

7th Day Adventist 11 a.m.
Catholic Mass 8 p.m.

Mini-Chapel (Bldg. 2)

Friday:

Jewish Service 6:30 p.m.
Eastern Orthodox services:

Saturday;

Vespers 5 p.m.
Confession 5:30 p.m.
Bible Study 7 p.m.

Sunday;

Divine Liturgy 9 a.m.

Post Office

Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Sunday 1 - 5 p.m.

Golby Troop Medical Clinic

Sick Call Hours:

Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon
Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon

Dental Sick call:

Monday - Friday 7:30 - 10:30 a.m.
Saturday 9 - 10:30 a.m.

Mental Health Clinic:

Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. - noon

Post Deployment Health Briefings:

Monday - Friday 1 p.m.

Pharmacy:

Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon
Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon

SCHOOL

section has meetings with the mayor on a regular basis, so we have come to know a lot of the 2,800 residents by name. They recognize our Soldiers as well."

The Soldiers are currently assisting the village in building a day care, remodeling the junior high school, upgrading electrical and water lines and

installing a new perimeter security fence, but Odoardi said they also plan to make another trip to the school with snacks and additional arts and crafts supplies.

"A lot of us have children back home, so we really enjoy spending time with the children," Odoardi said.



photo by Senior Airman Chawntain Sloan

Staff Sgt. Mario Alfaro, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 299th Infantry Regiment, Hawaii Army National Guard, hands out school supplies to children at Baghdad Airport Primary School. Each Operation Iraqi Freedom school supply kit included pens, pencils, paper and crayons.

Victory MWR Events September 27 - October 4

Today: Spades at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 124; Nine-ball at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 51; At the Gym: Tae-Kwon-Do from 6 - 7 p.m.; Fencing from 7:30 - 9 p.m.; Incredible-ball Softball Coaches Meeting at Bldg. 51 at 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday: Dominoes at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 124; Spades at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 51; At the Gym: Aerobics from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.; Boxing from 8 - 9 p.m.; Basketball coaches meeting at 12:30 p.m. in Bldg. 51.

Thursday: Country Night at 7 p.m. at Bldg. 124; Ping-Pong at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 51; At the Gym: Tae-Kwon-Do from 6 - 7 p.m. Power Lift at 7:30 p.m.

Friday: *Austin Powers* Movie Marathon at 3 p.m. at Bldg. 124;

Pictionary at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 51; At the Gym: Aerobics from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.; Fencing from 7:30 - 9 p.m.; Softball tournament.

Saturday: Hip Hop Night 8:30 p.m. at Bldg. 124; College football at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 51; At the Gym: Tae-Kwon-Do from 6 - 7 p.m.; Boxing from 8 - 9 p.m.; Kickball tournament.

Sunday: NFL football at 9 p.m. at Bldg. 124; NFL football at 9 p.m. at Bldg. 51; At the Gym: Fencing from 7:30 - 9 p.m.; Softball tournament.

Monday: Chess at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 124; Dominoes at 8 p.m. at Bldg. 51; At the Gym: Aerobics from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Boxing from 8 - 9 p.m.

MNC-I Commanding General: Lt. Gen. John R. Vines **MNC-I Production Chief:** Staff Sgt. Mark St.Clair
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