



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. James P. Douglas

Sgt. Thomas Schaeffer, 2nd Marine Division Combat Camera, prepares to remove a container express in order to make room for the Tactical Imaging Production System at the Combat Camera, 2nd Marine Div. compound.

## Iraq commander: reserve, guard at 'ramming speed'

By Col. Randy Pullen  
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — The former commanding general of Multi-National Corps - Iraq gave his assessment of the difference between the active and reserve-component Soldiers he commanded.

"There was no difference," said Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz as he spoke to more than 300 attendees at the Association of the United States Army's Guard and Reserve Leadership Breakfast Oct. 3. "There is no difference."

The III Corps commanding general had plenty of opportunities to see Army Reserve and Army National Guard Soldiers in action in Iraq. About 39 percent of the American forces in MNC-I during Operation Iraqi Freedom II were from the reserve components. That percentage has risen to 43 percent in OIF III.

Metz used the analogy of an ancient oar-driven warship to describe the pace of operations for the Army today and the lack of difference between the components.

"We're all at ramming speed," he said. "If you look around at the others pulling on the oars, you can't tell any difference in the guys on the other oars."

Metz explained that it would have been impossible to make up MNC-I without reserve and guard Soldiers and units.

"You don't fill out the joint commands without the reserve components," he said.

Besides individual citizen-Soldiers filling staff and others positions throughout the corps, there were also complete reserve and guard brigade-sized units in the corps, as well as smaller reserve component units that made up sizable percentages of active component brigade-sized units. Metz provided some details on this and the accomplishments of the units to the audience of senior reserve and guard leaders:

The 185th Aviation Brigade (the "Catfish Brigade") of the Mississippi Army National Guard was the first reserve component aviation brigade to deploy for combat since the Vietnam War.

About one quarter of Fort Hood's 504th Military Intelligence Brigade were citizen-Soldiers.

About half of the two Military Police brigades were citizen-Soldiers.

The 197th Field Artillery Brigade of the New Hampshire Army National Guard served as MPs in Iraq. The brigade's mission was to secure everything from

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## Service members receive reimbursement approval for gear bought out-of-pocket

By Jim Garamone  
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Some service members who bought their own protective gear will get reimbursed for the purchase under a new policy approved Oct. 4.

David S. C. Chu, the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, approved the directive that allows military personnel to be reimbursed "for privately purchased protective, safety or health equipment."

The order covers the period between Sept. 10, 2001, and Aug. 1, 2004. Pentagon officials said "relatively few" service members are affected by the order.

In the early days of the War on Terror, there was a shortage of interceptor armor. The services issued body armor to those most in need of it. However, some service members — both active and reserve component — bought their own protection.

Legislation passed by Congress earlier this year authorized the services to reimburse service members for the expenditures. The legislation applies to a spec-

ified set of personal protection equipment and can be claimed "by either the member or by another person on behalf of the member for the member's personal use in anticipation of, or during, the member's deployment for operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom."

Reimbursement is limited to the actual purchase price — plus shipping — of the equipment, and service members must have the receipts. Under the legislation, those claiming reimbursement must turn in their privately purchased gear. The services will destroy the equipment, as it may not meet government standards. Under the policy, reimbursement cannot exceed \$1,100 for any one piece of equipment.

The services can request to add items to the list. The list includes: the complete outer tactical vest or equivalent commercial ballistic vests. The components of the vest — groin protector, throat protector, yoke and collar assembly, collar protector, ballistics inserts and small arms protective inserts — are covered individually. The list also includes the Kevlar helmet, ballistic eye protection and hydration systems.

## Speed

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Baghdad to the south, to include the main supply route. The artillerymen also were given the mission to run the Joint Visitors Bureau, which meant that the safety of VIPs was entrusted to them. "They lost two Soldiers performing this duty," Metz said, "but no VIPs."

Ninety percent of the 13th Corps Support Command was from the reserve components. Metz said that the 13th COSCOM was running 200 convoys a day to keep the corps supplied with all it needed, such as the 1 million gallons of diesel fuel needed daily. "I am extremely proud of the COSCOM and that 90 percent of reserve component Soldiers who made it up."

The Civil Affairs Soldiers in MNC-I were almost entirely from the Army Reserve. Metz said that the work of Civil Affairs was the road to success

in Iraq and that the Civil Affairs Soldiers who worked for him were great.

The Army Reserve's 420th Engineer Brigade from Bryan, Texas, was another critical element in the corps' makeup. "When the insurgents were dropping bridges, cutting our main supply line," Metz said, "the engineers went out and re-built them, despite being subjected to small arms fire, rockets and mortars. The 420th did its mission — day after day."

Three of the maneuver brigade combat teams were from the Army National Guard: Washington's 81st Infantry Brigade, Arkansas' 39th Infantry Brigade and North Carolina's 30th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Metz said that these were tough outfits that had been assigned tough jobs, which they had done well.

Metz credited the successes of the reserve components in their understanding of the fundamentals. For example, he noted that the 30th BCT had served in Iraq

in combat without losing a single Soldier to an accident. He attributed that to good leaders doing the right things to ensure safe practices were followed.

In his closing thoughts, Metz said that the tough fight the Army was now in required the Army be revamped. He said that the Army Force Generation Model was an absolute requirement and although the model would not be easy for combat support and combat service support units, there was no other choice but for the model to be used.

Having come into the Army in the days of the draft, Metz said that the all-volunteer Army was the way to go. He pointed out that today's Army remains healthy because of the number of Soldiers who choose to stay with it.

Finally, he said, he said it was necessary for the tremendous partnership between the active Soldier and the citizen-Soldier to continue.

"We have to fight as a team, together," Metz said, "and we are."

## Influenza: preventing, controlling transmission

By Multi-National Corps - Iraq Surgeon's Office

Last year, two Soldiers in Mosul were diagnosed with influenza. Neither had been vaccinated against it, and in fact, the vaccination compliance rate for their unit was only 36 percent. Loss of personnel due to preventable illness is unacceptable.

Influenza, aka flu, is a contagious respiratory illness caused by a virus. Flu can cause mild to severe illness and can even lead to death; over 35,000 Americans died of flu last year. In Iraq, the flu season is year-round, but is worst in the winter months.

The influenza vaccine is a safe and effective means to prevent the flu. All U.S. service members must receive the flu shot unless medically exempted by their physician. Non-U.S. military, DA civilians, federal employees and eligible contractors are highly encouraged to get their flu shots as well.

Tips to avoid catching the flu:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw the tissue away after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based skin cleanser is OK to use if water is unavailable.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth. Diseases often spread this way.
- Avoid people who are sick. Don't share drinks or anything that touches your mouths.
- If you think you caught the flu, go to your Troop Medical Clinic. Avoid exposing yourself to other people if possible.
- If you sleep in close quarters, sleep head-to-toe to avoid breathing directly in another person's face.



To learn more about Iraqi and Coalition successes, log on to: [www.mnf-iraq.com](http://www.mnf-iraq.com) and follow the link to download this week's issue.



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PERSPECTIVES

# A school subject neglected later recollected

By Spc. Ferdinand Thomas  
Scimitar Assistant Editor

I think it's a fair assumption most children grow up taking education for granted. I did. My nap period was English. I always figured I would speak the language, but I would never have to write much besides figures with a dollar sign. I didn't know it then, but I was in for a rude awakening.

After high school graduation in 2002, I took a job with a commercial plumbing company. Working outdoors at the Newport News, Va., ship yard and other sites doing construction work across the peninsula weren't the happiest days of my life. The bills had to get paid, though. Those were my first lessons from the "School of Hard Knocks."

During my free time every day, I read the sports page in the local newspaper. I would call the editor on a regular basis to see if the newspaper staff needed any help. No was usually the word I would hear after asking him the question. After months of calling, I was granted an interview. That day I was hired on the spot as a high school sports reporter.

Traveling from school to school chasing athletes was not only fun, it was taking up much-needed space on my empty resume. At the end of football season, though, I

decided to change jobs so I could not only report, but write as well.

Writing recruiting reports, personality features and recaps on football and basketball games was different and tremendously harder than just reporting the stats. Even though I was happy with the things I was doing, I noticed I wasn't moving up fast enough. Shortly after, I ran into an Army recruiter, I told him I wanted to be a journalist in the Army, and he helped make it happen.

Basic Training was a breeze; riding my bike about 10 miles to work and playing basketball helped prepare me for that training. Advanced Individual Training was a whole different story; my superiors there didn't test me physically like in basic — mind games were the norm there. But most importantly, that's where I learned how hard it is to write.

In high school, English class

was two hours long. AIT, on the other hand, was eight hours and a ton of homework each day to keep me focused after school hours. Almost immediately after AIT, I deployed to Iraq, where my main job has been writing feature stories and taking photographs of our war heroes. To this day, I regret playing around in high school and not taking it more seriously because ironically, the one subject I didn't pay much attention in ended up being the career field I chose and committed to excel in.

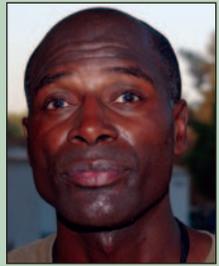
***"Even though I was happy with the things I was doing, I noticed I wasn't moving up fast enough."***

Spc. Ferdinand Thomas  
Scimitar Assistant Editor

## Scimitar Pulse

***What subject in school did you think you would never use again but actually did?***

"When I was in school, I never thought there was a subject I would not use."

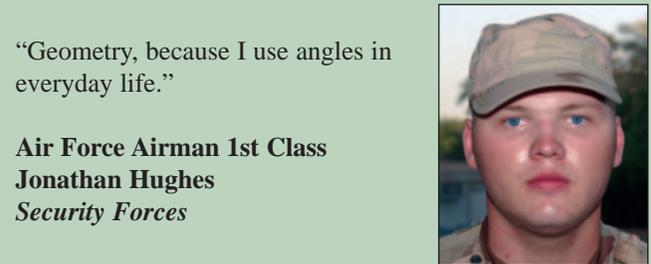


**Edgar Farris**  
Civilian Police Assistance  
Training Team



"I really hated math. Now I use it all the time in angles."

**Army Spc. David Dobson**  
1st Armored Division



"Geometry, because I use angles in everyday life."

**Air Force Airman 1st Class Jonathan Hughes**  
Security Forces



"History, because it gives me background of the area I am working in."

**Army Maj. Norman Young**  
75th Division



"History, because I apply the principles of our lifestyle to that of the Iraqis."

**Air Force Capt. Jason Medsger**  
Joint Area Support Group - Central



"Math is the one subject I didn't think I would use in real life, but math is the one subject that we use every day, whether we know it or not."

**Army Maj. Steve Adams**  
Multi-National Force - Iraq

"History, because I had to go through a lot of training to learn Iraqi culture before deploying."

**Marine Pfc. Brandon Grobe**  
Anti-Terrorism Battalion



## Welding well...



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Brian A. Jaques

U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Nathan Harrison from the Combat Logistics Battalion 8 Maintenance Company welds the slag off screws at Camp Fallujah, Iraq, Sept. 30. The Marines repair everything from the armor to the engines of Marine Corps vehicles.

# Aviation mechanics keep up with battle workload

Story and photo by Spc. Derek Del Rosario  
3rd Infantry Division  
Aviation Brigade Public Affairs

**CAMP TAJI, Iraq** — The sight of an Apache flying overhead can strike fear into anti-Iraqi forces, but when the aircraft mechanics of the 3rd Infantry Division Aviation Brigade get hold of them, what was once an intimidating aircraft in



**Spc. Matthew Stallard (left) and Pfc. Eric Cramer, both of A Company, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, work on an Apache rotorhead as part of its phase maintenance.**

the sky becomes an empty shell with all its major parts scattered across the ground.

Much like a car that is serviced after 30,000 miles, an Apache that has flown a total of 500 hours must undergo a phase maintenance inspection, in which the aircraft is completely broken down and its main components thoroughly checked for serviceability and quality assurance.

Phase maintenance is only part of what makes the Apaches currently in theater the most effective combat aircraft patrolling the skies. The continual maintenance of Company D, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Attack Reconnaissance), which recently put their 24th Apache into phase, and the proficiency of the Soldiers in Company A, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, are key factors in making sure the Apaches in the battalion are up to standard and ready to fly.

Putting their 24th aircraft into phase means the 3/3 ARB has flown more than 12,000 hours — an accomplishment that Sgt. 1st Class Bernard Brooks, noncommissioned officer in charge of production control in A Co., 603rd ASB, said has a direct impact on the operation tempo.

“Our troops are working very hard, and they put in long hours,” said Brooks, of Augusta, Ga. “The amount of flying impacts upon our phase inspections, so when the OPTEMPO is high, we are going to be doing a lot of inspections.”

Sgt. 1st Class William Eckert, NCOIC of production control in D Co., 3/3 ARB, coordinates with Brooks so the members of A Co., 603rd ASB can do the phase inspections on the battalion’s Apaches.

“The mechanics are working very hard, and I think that we currently have a good mix of flight time to inspection time,” said Eckert, of Lake Charles, La.

While the mechanics have been doing a good job keeping pace with the OPTEMPO, Eckert said what the mechanics accomplish during phase inspections is also quite an impressive feat.

“The Apache comes in the hangar door an aircraft, and in two or three days you look at that same aircraft again and it’s just a shell,” Eckert said. “The aircraft is completely broken

down, from the engine to the tail rotor.”

The phase inspection consists of many parts. The armament group performs electrical checks on things such as the guns, sights and all electrical components. The aircraft is broken down, and different sections are inspected before it is put back together. Mechanics then conduct a multi-operations check to make sure the bird is ready to fly. Finally, maintenance test pilots fly the aircraft for a final check before the Apache is once again ready for combat.

“A good phase can take up to two-and-a-half weeks,” Brooks said. “When it comes to Apaches, our company has phased approximately 50 so far.”

Eckert said being able to finish the Apache phase inspections in about 20 days is about 10 days faster than standard — a tribute not only to the hard work of the mechanics in A Co. but to the Soldiers of D Co. as well.

“603rd is doing their phases very efficiently, but a lot of that is due to how well our company keeps [the Apaches] maintained,” Eckert said. “Being able to phase out so many Apaches ensures the brigade has the combat power to do their missions.”

Brooks agreed that the two companies are working well together to provide the fastest turnover of mechanically-sound Apaches in a very prompt manner.

“We get a good handoff from A Co. because they conduct good pre-phase inspections,” Brooks said. “We use a phase book to keep track; that way when we get the Apaches for phase inspection, we already know a lot of what to do, which makes things flow faster and we can do the job quicker.”

While things such as the heat and OPTEMPO can be a challenge for the mechanics of the company, Brooks said the morale in the company is high because the Soldiers feel they are making ground-breaking accomplishments.

“The amount of flight hours and maintenance that this brigade puts in has never been done before here,” Brooks said. “It shows that we have some excellent mechanics and we are getting some excellent training. We are making history, for the company and the brigade, and it is gratifying to be a part of that.”

## Ali Base Airmen take steps to make sure body armor stays intact

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean  
407th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

**ALI BASE, Iraq** — Several unpleasant reactions may have crossed the minds of Airmen when the supply person handed them body armor for a deployment, and “heavy” was undoubtedly the most common reaction.

A two-plated vest body armor design, weighing more than some 3-year-olds and a necessity in many deployed locations, was never geared toward the casual lifestyle, but its weight, rigidity and unflinching resistance to comfort unarguably gives an unparalleled sense of security. There are times, however, when this sense of security is just that — a sense, because the plates that protect Airmen are useless dead weight.

Body armor is designed to protect troops from small-arms fire and fragmentation ammunitions, but it will fail if the integrity of the armor plates has been compromised. When the armor plates fail, bullets and fragments pass through the vest into the body.

Here, body armor plates no longer intact sit in a large crate in the 407th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron’s supply warehouse. The plates came from vests turned in by Airmen who redeployed home. There are currently more than 150 potential injuries or deaths in the crate.

“I wouldn’t want to be walking around with a vest with these plates in it — that’s just a waste of energy,” said Master Sgt. Steve Strange, the 407th ELRS supply supervisor, who is deployed from the Indiana Air National Guard’s 181st Fighter Wing.



**(From left) Senior Airman Josh Warren, Master Sgt. Steve Strange and Senior Airman Caslon Smith hold damaged plates that were removed from body armor vests. Much of the armor is unusable because it was mishandled.**

Personal safety is first and foremost here, but this is also a money issue. Depending on the size of the vest each plate came from, the average plate replacement cost is \$460. Putting that in perspective, the body armor in the one crate here has a replacement value of about \$70,000 — enough to rebuild a home in New Orleans.

Some of the plates are broken unavoidably, but most are broken because of mishandling.

“One of the biggest problems is that a lot of people put their vest in the bottom of their A-Bag in transit,” said Capt. Michael Robinson, the 407th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron operations officer, who is deployed from Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany. “Then the bags are thrown here and there during transport and loading, landing on the vest over and over.”

“It may sound funny, but the body armor, which is strong enough to stop a bullet, has to be handled carefully,” said Senior Airman Josh Warren, a 407th ELRS supply journeyman. “Dropping, tossing and carelessly storing body armor will render it useless when it has to do its job.”

Although there are no regulations outlining scheduled interval inspections of body armor, troops should take the plates out of their vests and inspect them once a week. Service members should check the plates for frayed outer skins, bursting seams, cracks and powder at the bottom of the vest pocket.

Another initiative security forces have taken was to build racks for their body armor.

“They’re just simple crosses on a frame,” Robinson said. “Nothing fancy — just a good place to hang the vests so they don’t get damaged.”

Robinson and Strange recommend service members hang vests on the back of a chair or on a strong hook, or set it flat on a sturdy surface when it is not being worn if racks are not available.

Proper handling, storage and periodic inspections are the key to making sure that body armor does its job when needed, Robinson said.

# Balad Air Force hospital specializes in saving lives



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Chad Watkins

**Air Force medics urgently attend to an Iraqi child who was caught in car bomb blasts that occurred in the town of Balad on Sept. 29. The child was rushed here to the Air Force Theater Hospital where more than 29 Iraqis were treated.**

**By Maj. Robert Couse-Baker**  
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

**BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq** — Shortly after terrorists set off a string of car bombs in the nearby town of Balad Sept. 29, medical professionals at the Air Force Theater Hospital here prepared for an influx of severely injured patients.

“When we started unloading the first Army helicopter, I realized everyone who came in was going to require an operation,” said Dr. (Maj.) Alan Murdock, chief trauma surgeon.

Working through the night and into the next day, the hospital’s staff would treat more than 29 Iraqi civilians, including three children. In all, the 19 military surgeons performed more than 80 procedures.

“This would have overwhelmed most level-1 trauma centers in the states,” said Dr. (Col.) Elisha Powell, commander of the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group. “Not a single one of [the injured Iraqis] had minor injuries.”

As the wounded arrived, it was clear to the staff that prioritizing the care was going to mean the difference between life and death for many of the patients. Murdock quickly began assessing the patients’ injuries, then matched them with the most qualified and appropriate providers.

“We broke the surgeons down into teams, depending on the injuries,” he said.

Some teams had an orthopedic surgeon matched with an expert in repairing blood vessels. Because of the extent of the carnage, many of the hospital’s specialists would need to apply their specialties, including brain surgery. Others would focus on basic emergency lifesaving efforts.

“Whatever skills you have, you put them to best use wherever they’re needed,” said Maj. Kim Sullivan, chief night nurse supervisor with the Australian Army. His focus was tracking the big picture of patient and resource flow.

Like a juggler, Sullivan said, “You have to keep a lot of balls in the air at once.”

By the standards of any medical center — let alone one operating in tents and trailers in a war zone — there was a

huge amount of activity. At times, there were as many as six simultaneous emergency operations.

“It’s the specific mix of people we have here that made this work,” said Lt. Col. Bryan Angle, 332rd EMG ophthalmologist.

Most of the medical personnel had only been here a couple of weeks, including many deployed from Wilford Hall Medical Center in San Antonio. The team also included a tri-service contingent from the Australian Army, Air Force and Navy. Early on, the word went out on base for all medical people to report to the hospital, but it was not necessary.

“When they heard the helicopters, they just came to the hospital,” said Lt. Col. Donna Smith, 332rd EMG chief operating room nurse.

Smith said much of the success of the response was due to the “silent heroes,” those who mopped the floors and took out the trash without being asked. Specifically, she cited the Airmen in central supplies who worked nonstop to keep clean the surgical instruments available for the huge number of operations.

The silent heroes were not just members of the hospital staff. Support from the rest of the base materialized wherever it was needed, she said.

“We didn’t have to ask for things like food and water. It just appeared,” said Dr. (Maj.) James Johnson, chief of anesthesiology.

But sustenance for the staff was not the only thing that arrived on cue. One Iraqi victim needed a transfusion of the rare blood type AB positive. This did not become a problem, however, as donors stepped forward just minutes after the request went out.

“It was an honor to assist the host nation health care system. Iraqi hospitals took care of many more of the casualties than we did,” Powell said.

Despite the success of saving so many lives, many in the hospital expressed frustration that the insurgents are targeting innocent civilians, including women and children.

“This was a terrible event. But we feel fortunate to be able to help heal some of the damage inflicted on our Iraqi neighbors,” Powell said.

## Tiny robot bears big responsibility in protecting troops

**Story and photos by Pfc. Matthew Clifton**  
Multi-National Corps - Iraq Public Affairs

**CAMP VICTORY, BAGHDAD** — 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, “MARCBOT,” is one piece of technology helping in the fight against improvised explosive devices in Iraq.



**Sgt. Michael Hanson, left, and Sgt. Bruno Diaz, 612th Eng. Bn., Ohio Army National Guard, test the controls for the MARCBOT before a mission at Camp Liberty, Baghdad.**

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 the most cost-effective and quickest way to solve any particular problem.

“Anything technical or scientific 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 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-sized 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 an IED and were not

comfortable going up there ourselves,” said 2nd Lt. Brian James Duncan, platoon leader, 2nd Platoon, Company C, 612th Engineer Battalion of the 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 several Soldiers manning the vehicle.”

There have also been cases when other pieces of equipment cannot reach into places like drainage ditches or underneath things like crosswalks.

“We can’t always take every piece of equipment we have off road, but we can take the MARCBOT,” Duncan said. “Our vehicles have the potential to get stuck if we take them into too-rough terrain, and that poses a whole new problem of exposing ourselves while we try to get the vehicle unstuck.”

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 said.

“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.”

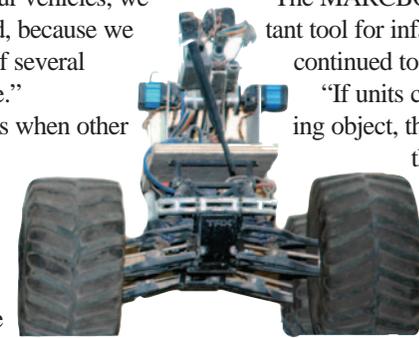
The MARCBOT would also be an important tool for infantry and other units, Duncan continued to explain.

“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.



**Different prototypes of the multi-function agile radio-controlled robot, “MARCBOT” give units in Iraq a state-of-the-art tool essential in combating the enemy.**

# Coalition Corner

... highlighting countries  
serving with MNF-Iraq



## Armenia

local name: *Hayastan*

The Republic of Armenia is located in Southwest Asia and borders Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran and Turkey. Size-wise, it is slightly smaller than Maryland with a population of 2.98 million. Armenia has a republic government system, and the Dram is its official currency. Armenian is the official language here; however Yezidi (Kurd) and Russian are also spoken throughout various regions.

Armenia has one of the richest histories in Europe. Yerevan, the capital, is one of the oldest continuously-lived in settlements in the world, boasting at least 20 museums throughout the city. Echmiadzin, the capital since around 184 A.D., is the site of the most important Orthodox cathedral, which is the home of the Supreme Catholicos, the head of the Armenian Orthodox Church. Twenty-eight kilometers west of Goris lies the Tatev Monastery, built on an enchanting natural fortress of rock on the edge of the Vorotan Canyon, offering spectacular views, especially of the Karabakh peaks. Lake Sevan, which lies east of Yerevan, is the largest lake in the Caucasus Mountains and is highly revered for its pure waters, breathtaking setting and outstanding salmon trout. A large part of Armenian cooking is based on lamb, which is either grilled and served as shashlik, a type of kabob, with flat bread, or prepared as a soup or stew called bozbash. Harissa, a typical Armenian dish, is a type of porridge made from stewed, boned chicken and soaked, coarsely-ground wheat. Another very popular dish is tolma, stuffed grape leaves baked casserole-style. Armenians take pride in khorovats, which are barbecues that are an ancient Armenian tradition still carried on today, any season of the year.

Several world-famous people boast Armenian heritage, such as Cher, born Cherilyn Sarkisian, and claims Armenian heritage through her father, whose parents left Armenia around World War I. Andre Agassi, the world-famous tennis player, also has paternal Armenian heritage. The four members of the popular music group System of a

Down, whose music is a mixture of metal, rap, jazz and Armenian melodies, are all of Armenian decent. The founder of the ultra-popular health food chain General Nutrition Centers, Inc., or GNC, had deep Armenian heritage.

Armenia — yet another piece of the Multi-National Force - Iraq puzzle, dedicated to rebuilding Iraq.

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## CHAPLAIN'S TALK

# Living through 'Management by Hurricane'

By Lt. Cmdr.  
J. Michael Hakanson,  
Chaplain  
Multi-National Force - Iraq

In the military we often see different styles of leadership. Sometimes it is not leadership at all, but management. Management can sometimes be pushed forward with such force we fool ourselves into thinking that we are working for a leader who is a hard charger. We label it with terms such as "old school" or "Hooah," or "old Navy." It has been a few years since I have worked for such a person — I have enduring memories!

Leadership inspires. Leadership makes people want to get on board, not duck for cover. In light of recent natural events, I have named this force for change, "Management by Hurricane." Take a look at the following correlations:

**Plotting the Course:** You know if you work for a person who practices Management by Hurricane because you are always worried about the storm track. Plotting the storm track is almost as important as your work, because it is nearly impossible to work when the storm hits. If you perceive an impending incident involving the supervisor as a Category 4 or 5, you usually try to evacuate if your presence is not expressly required.

**Storm Effects:** If you have tracked the storm and you are not directly in its path, you may experience some of the collateral effects of the storm

swirl. If you are to the right of the hurricane, your job is closely related to the target path, and you will get soaked because the wind is coming right off the water. If you are to the left of the storm track,

and your job is not related quite as much, it will be mostly wind. But if you are directly in the path, first the rain and wind will knock you down, and just when you catch your breath as the eye passes over, the wind will change and you will get hammered again in your weakened state. One thing for certain, just as the hurricane affects the entire area under the cloud, so also all those who work for the manager by Hurricane feel the effects.

**Aftermath:** Unfortunately, in the military, we often cannot choose who we work for. So we need to always remember our survival skills and consider the positives. As survivors, of any trying event, we are strengthened. James 1:2-5 states: *"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."*

If one's foundation is weakened, he or she may need rescue or support. This provides an opportunity for us to look after our brother or sister. But you might want to take a lesson



Chaplain Hakanson

from the scriptures here, too. A man named Job (there is a whole book on him) had just about everything in his life fall apart. All his children perished when their house collapsed,

and all his possessions were either destroyed or taken from him. A few friends came over to help him through it. Unfortunately, his friends tried to convince him that he was the problem. As in Job's case, so also as in the person who works for a Hurricane Manager; the trials were not of his doing. If his friends had come to sit with him, to listen and just to help him with his needs, the story might have been quite different. None of us may be able to pick who we work for, but we can choose how to help. If you don't know what to say, just listen.

Job's "storm" passed, and he was back on track with life and regained even more than what was destroyed. So also will it be the person who comes through the experience of working for a trying supervisor. If there is one thing that we can depend on as military personnel, all of us rotate in two or three years. Remember that when you think about getting out! You might end up working for a person who has practiced Manager by Hurricane in the same civilian job for 20 years and have no other place to go to escape the storm.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Iraqi Army takes over four districts

**BAGHDAD** — The Iraqi Army reached another historic milestone when the 6th Iraqi Army Division took over authority of the Kharkh, Rusafa, Thawra and Adhamiyah districts of Baghdad from Task Force Baghdad during a ceremony at the Muthana Airfield Oct. 3.

Iraqi Army Maj. Gen. Mahmoud Mohammad Khalaf al-Shumali, 6th Iraqi Army Division commander, raised the division's flag, signifying the assumption of authority and another step toward taking control of their own country.

During his speech, Mahmoud expressed confidence in his division and its ability to secure the Baghdad area.

"It is a great opportunity and a great event that we have been given the honor to receive responsibility of our units in these areas," he said. "Our beloved Baghdad and its people should feel safe with our units responsible for their safety. We pledge to do our best to serve our people and to reconstruct our country."

### Foreign fighter facilitator killed

**BAGHDAD** — Coalition Forces killed a known al Qaeda in Iraq member near Fallujah before he could activate a suicide bomb strapped to his body Oct. 8.

Abu Sarmad had facilitated transportation and housing for foreign fighters and suicide bombers who had been smuggled into Iraq through Syria.

Additionally, he received support and guidance from Saudi Arabian extremist financiers and was believed to be a major link for supporting terrorist activity between al Qaeda in Iraq in Baghdad and the Western Euphrates River Valley.

Sarmad was wearing a suicide bomb vest and appeared to be prepared to kill himself and others in the event of his capture. Coalition assault forces shot Sarmad before he could activate the explosives strapped around his torso.

Eight additional individuals were detained during the operation.

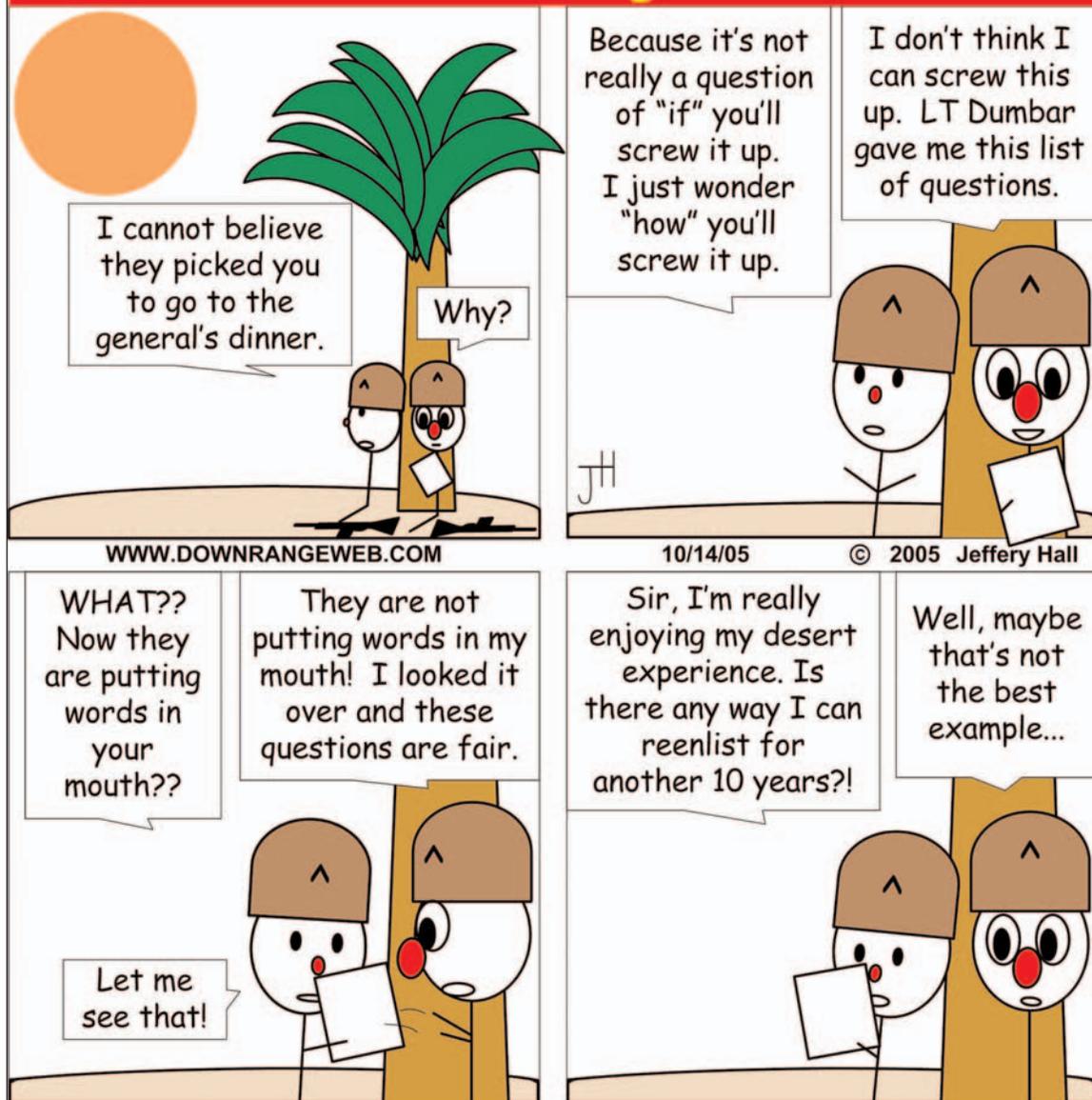
# Scimitar Slapstick

## A day in the life of a "Pog Hog"



Art by Staff Sgt. Timothy Lawn

## Downrange



Art by Jeffery Hall



Art by Maj. James D. Crabtree



**Guidons, Guidons, Guidons ...**

Net Call for all Norwich University graduates in the AOR! Please contact: Lt. Col. Basheer Ilyas (NU '88) or Maj. Tom Simons (NU '92) at DSN 318-822-2160/2280 or [thomas.simons@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:thomas.simons@iraq.centcom.mil)



Hoaxes are a real threat.

Always treat them as real.




0015 IEDs KILL

# High School Reunion

## Three Marines, best friends from same hometown serve together in Iraq

Story and photo by Lance Cpl. Lucian Friel  
2nd Marine Division

**CAMP AL QA'IM, Iraq** — Some people say the U.S. Marine Corps is a small community in a small world. Three Clearwater, Fla., natives who live less than five minutes from each other are proof of that theory.

Sgt. Chris Whitman, 23, Cpl. Matt Orth, 22, and Lance Cpl. Benjamin Hallstrom, 22, are all deployed here with the same unit, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment. The three Marines are all graduates of Clearwater High School — Whitman in 2000, Hallstrom in 2001 and Orth in 2002.

Whitman and Orth were in Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps together, where the two competed against other JROTC cadets in state color guard competitions. Both were absolutely determined to join the Corps when they left high school. Whitman joined the Marine Corps and became a mortar man, but Orth made a detour and decided to join the U.S. Army Reserve and left for basic training the summer before his senior year.

When Orth returned from basic training to start his senior year, he and Hallstrom, who was in his freshman year of college, started to spend more time together and eventually became best friends.

Then in 2002, after discovering that he could not deploy to Afghanistan with his Army unit, Orth left college and the Army and went to Marine recruit training in November 2002.

"My original plan was to be in the Army Reserve, go through college, become a commissioned officer and then join the Corps. But, I figured I might as well join now and go active duty," Orth explained.

When Orth returned from recruit training, Hallstrom seemed to be interested in joining the Corps as well.

"When [Orth] got back, that's when I really started thinking about joining, so I talked to him about it," Hallstrom said.

While Orth moved on to the School of Infantry East at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Hallstrom started to talk to a Marine Corps recruiter. Not letting Orth "one-up him," Hallstrom joined the Corps and left for recruit training in September 2003.

By this time, Whitman had been in the Corps for almost three years and returned from Iraq in May of 2003 with Company L, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines. Little did he know he would see a familiar face at the company's formation. While Whitman was in Iraq, Orth had received his orders to Company L and headed to Camp Lejeune, N.C. During the morning formation after his return, Whitman glanced over at the new Marines joining his platoon, and there was Orth.

"I was so surprised to see [Orth] standing there; I was pretty dumbfounded," Whitman explained.



Lance Cpl. Benjamin Hallstrom, Cpl. Matt Orth and Sgt. Chris Whitman, Marines with 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment deployed to Iraq, are all natives of Clearwater, Fla., and graduates of Clearwater High School.

"Two years prior, who would have thought we would be standing together in the same platoon in the same unit in the Marine Corps?" Orth said.

The two Marines were reunited in the color guard at that year's Marine Corps birthday ball. But Orth soon departed to Afghanistan as a sniper for the battalion.

Meanwhile, Hallstrom finished SOI to become a rifleman and learned of his new unit.

"They told me Company M, 3/2, and the first thing I did was call [Whitman] at Lejeune and asked him what unit he was with. Sure enough, he said, 3/2," Hallstrom explained.

As Orth's deployment to Afghanistan came to an end, he heard Hallstrom was in Company M and would be deploying to Cuba soon. Orth quickly came to a conclusion.

"I knew there was only one battalion that had a Mike Co. going to Cuba, and that was this battalion," Orth said.

After that, Whitman was on the second half of the deployment to Afghanistan and ended up relieving Orth.

"So at this point, [Hallstrom] was in Cuba, [Orth] returned to the states to start sniper school in Quantico, Va., and I was in Afghanistan on my second deployment," Whitman explained.

Between October and November of 2004, the three high school friends returned to their battalion at Camp Lejeune. The three went home together for Christmas leave and spent a lot of time catching up on the experiences they had.

"It's funny — when we went home together on leave, the three of us would be at a party or something, and we would start talking about things in the Marine Corps, and no one else there would understand what we were talking about," Whitman explained.

In February, the three Marines deployed together, but they would not be together for long. Whitman was stationed at Marine Corps Air Station, Al Asad, Iraq, as a member of the base guard force. Orth was sent to Camp Gannon in Husaybah, Iraq, with the battalion's scout sniper platoon. Hallstrom, a team leader with Company K, was stationed at Camp Al Qa'im, Iraq, participating in Operation Matador, as well as other operations.

"So, again, we were all in the same unit, in the same country, but only within 100 miles of each other," Orth explained.

But in mid-June, the battalion needed more snipers at Al Qa'im. Orth was sent to the camp and was attached to Hallstrom's platoon for the next mission.

During Operation Spear, a five-day operation conducted to destroy insurgents in the city of Karabilah, Orth and Hallstrom found themselves reminiscing on a rooftop in the city one night.

"Who would have thought two best friends would end up on a rooftop in Iraq during a battle talking about old times in high school?" Hallstrom asked.

After Operation Spear in July, Orth and Hallstrom were joined by their friend Whitman when L Co. came to Al Qa'im to finish its deployment with the battalion.

"The first time I saw them here, I said, 'Thank God they're alive,' because in Al Asad, we were pretty safe, but we would hear about all the things going on here. I couldn't wait to get here and see them," Whitman said.

As the three Marines spend their last days in Iraq, hanging out during down time and going to dinner together every night, one thing is on all of their minds: What to do when they all return home.

The three are scheduled to return to the United States in early fall, and the time to redeploy makes Orth reflect on the past five years.

"It's crazy when you think about it," said Orth. "The three of us live five minutes from each other back home, and here we are together in Iraq. You couldn't ask for a better story than that," Orth explained.

Hallstrom and Whitman simply nodded their heads and agreed that it is going to be a great story to tell when they get home.

## Baghdad disabled Iraqis get upgraded sports center



Iraqi citizens play basketball at the Wisam Almajd Club for Sport of the Disabled, a recreation center built by community leaders and the U.S. Army. The 448th CA Bn. has made improving the sports club an ongoing project.

Story and photos by  
Spc. Derek Del Rosario  
Task Force Baghdad Public Affairs

**BAGHDAD** — Baghdad residents who are mobility impaired or have other disabilities now have a place to gather for sport and recreation, thanks to the ongoing efforts of community leaders and the U.S. Army.

The Wisam Almajd Club for Sport of the Disabled is a center where people who use wheelchairs and individuals with disabilities can play basketball, fence or lift weights.

The 448th Civil Affairs Battalion has assisted a continuing effort to improve the center by adding a kitchen to the sports club. This addition was commemorated during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the club Sept. 25.

The sports club has a full basketball

court with bleachers, a gym with exercise equipment, free weights and now a kitchen for patrons to enjoy.

Sgt. 1st Class Dennis O'Connor, a member of the civil affairs battalion and an Appleton, Wis., native, acted as a project manager and met with community leaders to improve the center.

"This is an ongoing project that was built from the ground up," O'Connor said. "This is an organization whose participants are very active and get involved with projects involving the community."

While the sports club is open to anyone who wants to use its facilities, it is also the place where a wheelchair basketball team practices and a power-lifting team trains.

"The sports club welcomes everyone, and every time I visit, I see new faces,"

O'Connor said. "There are usually around 30 to 40 participants on a given day. They are really big on their sports, and they are really proud. They often show me their ribbons and awards."

An Iraqi citizen goes for a lay-up in the gym at the Wisam Almajd Club for Sport of the Disabled.

Mohamed Abass is one club member who participates in power-lifting competitions. While he uses a wheelchair to aid in mobility, he does not need it for the bench press. Abass can lift 352 pounds — almost three times his body weight.

"I've been working out here for the past four years," Abass said. "This [club] is the only place for

the disabled in Baghdad, and probably the only place in Iraq."