

# *The Freedom Post*

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## TFF Remembers 9-11

*Story by Spc. Ashly Mitchell*

**M**OSUL, Iraq - Soldiers of Task Force Freedom gathered together Sunday, Sep. 11, to remember the men and women who lost their lives in the bombing of the Twin Towers on Sep. 11, 2001.

The ceremony began with the singing of the National Anthem led by Chaplain (Capt.) Robert Nay, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) Chaplain. Chaplain (Capt.) Steve Dunn, Battalion Chaplain for 2-1 Infantry, 172nd SBCT, gave a prayer asking for peace and comfort for the families and friends of 9-11 victims.

A timeline of the events was given by Chaplain (Capt.) Ken D. Harris, Task Force Freedom Chaplain, including the times when the each tower collapsed and when sections of the Pentagon collapsed due to fire. All flights during that time were grounded, only military and medical flights were allowed.

Soon after the attack, a comment was made by Saddam Hussein saying, "This attack is the fruit of U.S. crimes against humanity." The U.S. threat level was raised and President George W. Bush made the remark, "The terrorists can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot shake our foundations."

Col. Michael H. Shields, Commander of the 172nd Stryker Brigade, was stationed at Fort Bragg, NC, when the towers were hit. "The first thought in my mind was how do we help?" he said. "The families and friends of the victims would need a lot of support to get through this ordeal." Shields was one of the speakers during the ceremony.

During his speech, Shields mentioned the history of other terrorist attacks on the U.S. including the 1995 bombing of the Twin Towers and the Oklahoma City bombing. "We are fighting enemies with no value or respect for life," he remarked.

After Shields finished, Chaplain Dunn led the guests in the singing of God Bless America. The ceremony gave people a moment to think back about that day; remember where they were, what they were doing, what their first thought was when the towers collapsed, remember the victims and their families, and admire the courage of the servicemen and women who lost their lives trying to save them.

### *The* **Freedom Post**

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# Forward TOC sets up in Tal Afar

Story and Photos by Sgt. Daniel W. Lucas



HHT Soldiers unpack their trucks to start setting up the new TOC.

TAL AFAR, Iraq – Recently, mortar fire, small arms fire, and explosions from improvised explosive devices echoed through the streets of Tal Afar. Following the destruction, the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) and the Iraqi Army (IA) set up a forward Tactical Operations Center (TOC) close to the town in preparation to root out the terrorists who have come to call this place their new home.

“A Forward TOC is a manifestation of the unit in the field to keep communications with Soldiers on the ground,” said Sgt. 1st Class Clarence McKaine, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop (HHT), 1st Squadron, 3rd ACR. “It is supposed to help maintain command, control, and communication with the units, because if those aren’t upheld, the units won’t be as effective.”

“It is easier to get reception with units in the field from here than from the main TOC, said 1st Lt. Alex Vershinin, HHT, 1/3 ACR. “We can also track units faster with less interference.”

As soon as the troopers from HHT got to the location of the temporary TOC, a lot of factors had to be considered; security and the ability to communicate were on the very top of the list.

“We are bringing out various barriers and sandbags to fortify force protection here,” said Capt. Terrence Buckeye, Commander, HHT, 1/3 ACR. “It took a full day to set up all the equipment and make sure the force protection measures are adequate.” He added that a platoon of

IA Soldiers is helping guard the forward TOC by guarding the main gate and manning two of the guard towers.

When the building was sandbagged and the barriers were in place, the antennas went up and the Soldiers’ pushpins dotted the activity of that day on maps. Lighting was also placed, powered by generators they brought with them to keep the TOC going throughout the night.

Setting up the forward TOC may be all in a days work for the HHT troopers, but the TOC they created stays up and running 24 hours a day, keeping constant communication with all of the units currently deployed in Tal Afar.

“Each situation has its own unique challenges,” said McKaine. “We have everything we really need here to be successful. These guys are performing a job most guys won’t do, and they go above and beyond. This is a great unit doing great things.”

Even though the HHT set up the TOC in a matter of hours, they were pushed to do it right, not to do it fast. “It’s not about the speed which we do our mission,” said McKaine. “It’s about the effectiveness of it. Anybody can run though and tear stuff up, but these guys are taking their time and doing things right. That means saving lives for us and the Iraqis, they know their jobs and they are doing them well.”



Putting the final touches on the new TOC, maps are setup to track unit movements throughout Tal Afar

# MiTT Changes Hands

*Story and Photos by Spc. Ashly E. Mitchell*

**M**OSUL, Iraq - Soldiers of the 98th Division Military Transition Team (MiTT) passed the training and mentoring of the 3rd Division Iraqi Army (IA) Soldiers to the 80th Division out of Rochester, NY on Sept. 3.

The Transfer of Authority included Maj. Gen. David M. Rodriguez, Task Force Freedom (TFF) Commander, as a guest speaker. Rodriguez has observed the MiTT and the 3rd IA Division's progress since his arrival in April. The ceremony began with the entrance of the official party including; Rodriguez, Col. Sanford Holman, Commander of the outgoing 98th Div. MiTT, and Lt. Col. Kenneth Nielson, Commander of the incoming 80th Div. MiTT.

Soldiers saluted an American Flag that was attached to the antenna of a humvee while the National Anthem played. IA Soldiers stood in a small formation off to the side to watch as their previous mentors prepared to pass the torch to the 80th Div.

"During a traditional transfer of authority, the outgoing unit would pass their guide-on to the incoming unit," said Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Riggs, Command Sgt. Maj. of the 80th Div. MiTT. "Since the 98th Div. MiTT doesn't have a guide-on, we will be passing an AK-47 instead." Rodriguez and both MiTT commanders assisted as the AK-47 was passed from Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Riti to Riggs symbolizing the change of leadership.

Rodriguez was the first to speak at the ceremony and had a translator so the IA Soldiers could understand the progression of the ceremony. He commented on the outstanding job the 98th has done assisting and guiding the 3rd Div. IA. He also offered condolences for three 98th Soldiers who lost their lives in support of the mission.

"It has been a great honor to work with these Soldiers," said Holman. "One year ago, this division of IA Soldiers was born. Thanks to the help of their commander, Maj. Gen. Khursheed, they have become very successful Soldiers." Holman finished his speech by thanking TFF for all of their support and welcoming Nielson and the Soldiers of the 80th to Al Kisik.

"I want to thank the 98th MiTT for making the transition so smooth for us," said Nielson. "They helped us adjust to our new environment and trained us to work together with Khursheed and his Soldiers. We all look forward to working with TFF and working alongside the Iraqi Soldiers."



# Major General Fil Visits MPSA

*Story and Photos by Spc. Ashly E. Mitchell*

**M**OSUL, Iraq - Maj. Gen. Joe Fil, commander of the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team (CPATT) visited the Mosul Public Safety Academy (MPSA) on Aug. 16 to see the progress that has been made.

Fil, along with Maj. Gen. David Rodriguez, commander of Task Force Freedom (TFF), and Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky Pring, Command Sgt. Maj. of TFF, were given a tour of the facilities at the MPSA by Lt. Col. Alan Neidermeyer, CPATT Regional Academies Liaison Officer.

The group walked to the range where cadets will learn how to fire.

"We still need to get some bunkers on the range in case we get mortared," said John Hayes, Academy Director. "We also need to find a way to make the back wall of the range higher, so cadets don't hit livestock that happen to wander behind the range."

After visiting the range, the group moved to the chow hall and the gym

area. An area was recently partitioned in the gym to create a uniform issue point for new recruits.

According to Hayes, new uniforms and boots have already arrived and more are on order. "As long as we don't have a bunch of cadets that are all the same size, we should have no problem supplying uniforms to the first rotation," joked Hayes.

"You guys are doing a great job here," said Fil. "You've made a lot of progress since I was here last." After showing Fil and Rodriguez around the MPSA,

the party boarded Black Hawk helicopters and flew to Harbor Gate to visit the Turkish border.

When they arrived, Fil and Rodriguez met with members of the border patrol and Iraqi Army (IA) dignitaries. They met to discuss the efforts that have been made to maintain security and what is needed to help IA Soldiers working at the Turkish border.

Both generals took a tour of the facilities and met with Soldiers from the 3rd Corps Support Command out of Germany. The Soldiers work with new convoy

tracking equipment, so they are able to track the contents of each convoy and all the personnel on board.

After the tour, the party traveled to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Courage.

The next morning the party regrouped and traveled to Irbio, on the Syrian border. There, they received a security briefing from members of the Syrian Border Patrol and Col. H.R. McMaster, Commander of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment. Following the briefing, the party went on a walking tour of the border, stopping

to talk to different workers along the way.

Fil stopped to talk with Staff Sgt. Passov, a military policeman with a K-9 unit out of Germany. "We've been here since July 21," said Passov. "The dogs are a new security measure that have been added to the border." Passov's working dog, Chris, also received some attention by Fil during their discussion.

Soon after, Fil ended his visit of the TFF area of operations and boarded a plane at the Mosul Airfield for his trip back to Baghdad .



*Maj. Gen. Fil earns the trust of the MPSA's shortest Soldier.*

## The Situation in Tal Afar is under Control, says Khursheed

Story by Spc. Ashly E. Mitchell

**T**AL AFAR, Iraq - Maj. Gen. Saleem Hassan Al-Dosky Khursheed, Commander of the 3rd Iraqi Army (IA) Division in Al Kisik, met with Maj. Gen. David M. Rodriguez, commander of Task Force Freedom (TFF), on Aug. 28 to discuss the current situation in Tal Afar and the needs of the 3rd Div. IA.

"Although the IA has currently been struggling to recruit officers below the rank of Major, that hasn't kept them from getting the job done," said Rodriguez. "The staff and brigade officers we do have are very good and very talented. In the past several weeks they've had many successful operations, and discovered many caches. They continue to do a fantastic job."

Over the past months, terrorists have been spreading propaganda about the IA being prejudice against certain tribes, according to Khursheed. This kept many citizens who are of age from registering to vote because they are unsure of how the government will treat their tribe.

The 3rd IA is working hard to separate the Anti-Iraqi Forces (AIF) from the Sunni Turkoman population, work for cooperation between the different tribes, and eliminate the strong hold the AIF have on the people of Tal Afar. "The situation in Tal Afar is going to be under control," said Khursheed.

Rodriguez and Khursheed discussed plans for future operations in the 3rd IA area of operations, and worked on a few logistics problems; however, the main focus of the meeting was bringing peace and comfort back to the people of Tal Afar.

There has been recent progress with the union of the tribes, according to Khursheed. More citizens from different tribes are joining the Iraqi Police and IA even though the leaders of their tribes are against it.

"Iraqi forces are being well led and well trained," said Rodriguez. "We want the citizens of Tal Afar to know that the operations conducted by the IA are not against any tribe. Terrorists are criminals and they need to be stopped."

"The 3rd IA has been working with Soldiers from the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment on many of their current operations. With continued cooperation and hard work between the two forces, Tal Afar should soon be under control," said Khursheed.

## What's up Charlie Brown?

Photo By Sgt. Richard W. Way



"We flipped a coin and he lost," his co-workers joked as Charles Brown replaced an antenna high up on a tower at Forward Operating Base Courage.

KBR employees Gary Wray, left, Ed Edquid, center, and Ken York on the right watched as Brown worked atop the fully extended hydraulic lift.

"I don't really mind it. Once I get my bearings, it's not too bad," said Brown. "Hopefully, I won't have to go up there again."

# Iraqi Army along with Elements of 4-11 FA Conduct Combined Cordon and Knock

*Story courtesy of 172nd SBCT*

**M**ULLHALLIBIYAH, Iraq- Task Force (TF) Thunder 4-11 Field Artillery (FA), led by LTC Scott Wuestner, conducted a combined operation with 1st and 2nd Iraqi Army (IA) Battalions of the 3rd Brigade Second IA Division, in the town of Mullhallibiyah to catch suspected terrorists.

The units conducted a well-planned cordon and knock involving two Iraqi Army battalions, Iraqi Police, A Co. and C Co. 4th Squadron 11th Field Artillery Regiment, and elements of 4th Battalion 23rd Infantry Regiment. They screened approximately 2,000 military age males. The operation led to the capture of many suspected terrorists.

After the screening process was completed, the units delivered humanitarian aid which included passing out food and water. The cordon and knock operation demonstrated another example of the Iraqi Army (IA) and Coalition Forces working together.

This operation comes after TF 2nd Squadron, 8th Field Artillery Regiment "Automatic" transferred authority to 4-11 Thunder.. This was the first major operation for TF 4-11. The IA and TF 4-11 Thunder will continue to maintain pressure against the terrorists in order to ensure a successful referendum in October, and to help provide a more stable and secure Iraq.

1LT Underwood from 2-8 Automatic passing the torch to CPT Branson of TF 4-11 Thunder.



Locals go through the screening process in Mullhallibiyah.

# First GMLRS Fired in Combat

*Story and Photo by Daniel W. Lucas*

TAL AFAR, Iraq – From over 50 km away, a platoon of M270A1 rocket/missile launchers positioned themselves to strike. Their arsenal rotated towards the city of Tal Afar as a target was programmed in the computer. Within a few minutes, six rockets left their launchers. Each rocket left a cookie cutter section of a building used by insurgents as a defensive position, in rubble. This was the first battlefield use of the Guided Missile Launcher Rocket System (GMLRS) since its introduction.

With the weapon system proved in combat, two more rockets were fired to destroy another insurgent position the next night with the same lethal precision as the first strike. Both times the damage to the surrounding homes was almost non-existent and the target's destruction was absolute.

“This system is all weather, precision, Global Positioning System (GPS), low collateral damage, long range, lethal effect munitions,” said Capt. Robert J. Hannah, 3-13 Field Artillery (FA) Battery Commander. “This allows ground commanders to precisely attack small targets, even in an urban environment, with lower collateral damage than precision bombs used by the U.S. Air Force.”

Another remarkable feature of the rockets is the longer they are in the air, the more precise they become. Most rockets follow an arc from the launcher. This means factors such as weather have to be taken into account before the rocket is launched. It also requires the launcher to be positioned and aimed in a certain way because even one degree off could mean disaster at the other end.

“We have to engage the suspension lockout so when the rocket fires, it is on the correct heading so the next rocket will also be on the same heading,” said Spc. Thomas Leute, gunner for B-31, 3-13 FA. “If it moves too much after the first rocket fires, the second could be out of place,” said Staff Sgt. Daniel Waorowski, crew chief, 3-13 FA. The new GMLRS follows a path similar to a missile, firing higher into the sky and diving on its target to reduce collateral damage and allow the rocket to correct itself mid-flight for increased accuracy.

cy.

The rocket isn't the only innovation for the launchers; the on-board computer boasts the ability to communicate with either Tactical Operations Center and can receive missions from almost anywhere in the world. Each launcher also has its own GPS system, feeding even more information into the rocket and the computers to increase the accuracy of their arsenal.

“The fire system is completely digital, there is no voice communication necessary,” said Sgt. David Helton, crew chief of B-31, 3-13 FA, who fired the first two rounds in combat. “We receive our mission from the computers of the Fire Support Officer (FSO) with all of the coordinates of the aiming points of the target. Then, each launcher is assigned aim points to fire upon.” When a voiced mission is given, there is a chance of miscommunication. With the new system, each launcher is given exact coordinates fed





from the Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System.

Each launcher can communicate to the FSO's through the system to verify the status of the launcher and the mission.

The idea isn't a new one for the U.S. Army, the same launcher has the capability to fire two long range missiles with similar effects. With the GMLRS's smaller size, the launchers can carry more of them; maintaining the same effectiveness at a lower cost while engaging more targets.

"We aren't reinventing the wheel," said Hannah. "We are using the same system but with improved munitions." The older munitions were the same rockets minus the GPS.

They can disperse sub-munitions over a large area

without the incredible accuracy boasted by the GMLRS.

Even the M270A1 launchers aren't brand new. They are built on the same chassis as the Bradley Fighting Vehicle. They are currently the only platform that can fire the new GMLRS. The 3-13 fielded these new vehicles in June 2004 and has been preparing for this mission ever since.

Before the system could be fired in combat, it still needed to be tested in battlefield conditions. In May, the 3-13 FA found an abandoned building far away from the city to test the capabilities for their new system. The structure had a few rooms and was missing part of its roof, proof that it had not been occupied for a very long time. With a few key strokes, three rockets were launched at the building. After the Soldiers were given the "all clear", they found a three-foot piece of wall was all that remained of their target.

Hannah and his Artillerymen constantly train on their computers and with the launchers. Each night, Hannah drills with the crews and the FSOs to make sure every outcome is prepared for. Mock missions are developed and executed to make sure all Soldiers are ready to fire on a moment's notice.

Even the environment poses its own dilemma. The wind blows fine "moon dust" into all of the systems of the launcher. Keeping the maintenance and launcher crews constantly checking and servicing their vehicles. But even when the helicopters and other aircraft are grounded due to weather, the launchers can fire rockets with the same accuracy.

In an urban setting like Tal Afar, targets have to be generated from intelligence to ensure buildings of the local populous aren't needlessly destroyed. Each of the targets are preplanned. Before a target is fired upon, a link to the insurgency must be proven by Soldiers on the ground. After the approval of the mission, a battle drill is rehearsed so all sections know what needs to be accomplished prior to executing the mission. All the ground and air forces are then cleared of the rocket's path. The Fire Support Element provides guidance to synchronize the units on the ground to prevent fratricide. After the drill, the rockets are fired and ground units monitor the result.

The outcome of the training and hard work the 3-13 FA has done paid off. With 8 rockets fired, two insurgent buildings totally destroyed, the new system and its crews have shown the ability of the new GMLRS system and its effect when fielded in combat.

# DEVELOPING CULT

## WHAT YOU SHOULD

**MOSUL, Iraq - Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar and is marked as a “month of blessing” by prayer, fasting and charity. Determined by the lunar calendar (28 days per month), this year, Ramadan falls between Oct. 4 or 5 through Nov. 2 or 3. Ramadan is followed by the festival of Eid Al-Fitr, a time of feasting and celebration.**

**It is a time for Muslim observers to engage in spiritual reflection and to unite peacefully with their families and faith. Coalition Forces support the Iraqi people’s right to celebrate their religious identity, rich heritage, and encourage Muslims to follow the spirit of Ramadan and demonstrate respect for Ramadan’s observances during this holy month. During Ramadan, MNF-I will respond to the Iraqi Transitional Government’s requests for security support. The Rule of Law, or Islamic Sheri’a, is in effect as the Iraqi people define their own future.**

**Ramadan is one of the five pillars of the Islamic faith, commemorating the first revelation of the Koran. With certain exceptions (e.g. pregnant women and the sick), fasting is compulsory for every Muslim adult from the break of dawn until sundown. Besides not eating, Muslim adults refrain from drinking, smoking and sexual activity. They are also expected to make a special effort to pray five-times daily.**

**During Ramadan, work continues, although some Muslims only work for half a day. During the day, many Muslims spend increased periods of time praying and studying the Koran. At night, the fast is broken with a prayer and a meal known as the Iftar, after which Muslims customarily visit family and friends.**

**The last seven nights of Ramadan, and the nights after, Eid Al-Fitir, are on or about Oct. 23 to Nov. 3 this year. It is a special time of**

**prayer when Muslims devote themselves to God and good deeds. There is also increased attendance at mosques during this time. Additionally, there is a special “Night of Glory/Power” (Lailat UI-Qadr), this year between Oct. 23 and 31, when devout Muslims stay awake and offer prayers throughout the night. Lailat UI-Qadr is revered as the most important night of Ramadan. It was the night when the Koran was revealed to the prophet Mohammed. Eid Al-Fitr is rated as one of the two most important Islamic celebrations (the other being the Hajj, or Mecca pilgrimage) when people dress in their finest clothes, decorate their homes and feast with family and friends.**

# URAL SENSITIVITY

## KNOW ABOUT RAMADAN

Coalition Forces will maintain a respectful distance away from Ramadan celebrations and Holy Sites unless assistance is requested by the Iraqi Security Forces.

The Coalition is educating its Soldiers to show respect for Ramadan and not to interfere with Ramadan celebrations.

Leaders are training Coalition Soldiers to show respect and tolerance towards Muslims during the Ramadan season in order to prevent religious or cultural misunderstandings.

The Fourth Pillar of Islam is Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic year. Ramadan is a “Month of Blessing”, a month of prayer and fasting, in which Muslims abstain from food, drink, smoking, and sexual activity during the period from dawn to dusk.

Each day of Ramadan, Muslims move closer to Iftar, which implies moving toward self and nature.

Ramadan ends with the feast of the breaking of the fast, Eid Al-Fitr. Eid Al-Fitr resembles Christmas in its religious joyfulness, special celebrations, and gift giving.

Muslims will gather for prayer at dawn, noon, 1430-1500 Mid-day, sunset, and finally the Al Isha’ prayer, which is the main prayer gathering of the day.

There will be increased activity and people in and around mosques during Ramadan.

The night of power, Laylat Al-Qadr, falls on Oct. 31. This evening commemorates the first revelation of the Holy Koran to the prophet Mohammed. **CELEBRATORY GUN-FIRE IS LIKELY.**

If you are asked questions outside the scope of the information provided here, please refer the queries to the Task Force Freedom Public Affairs Office. 243-0062

# The Final Inspection

*The Soldier stood and faced God,  
Which must always come to pass.  
He hoped his shoes were shining,  
Just as brightly as his brass.*

*"Step forward now, you Soldier,  
How shall I deal with you?  
Have you always turned the other cheek?  
To My Church have you been true?"*

*The Soldier squared his shoulders and said,  
"No, Lord, I guess I ain't.  
Because those of us who carry guns,  
Can't always be a saint.*

*I've had to work most Sundays,  
And at times my talk was tough.  
And sometimes I've been violent,  
Because the world is awfully rough.*

*But, I never took a penny,  
That wasn't mine to keep...  
Though I worked a lot of overtime,  
When the bills got just too steep.*

*And I never passed a cry for help,  
Though at times I shook with fear.  
And sometimes, God, forgive me,  
I've wept unmanly tears.*

*I know I don't deserve a place,  
Among the people here.  
They never wanted me around,  
Except to calm their fears.*

*If you've a place for me here, Lord,  
It needn't be so grand.  
I never expected or had too much,  
But if you don't, I'll understand.*

*There was a silence all around the throne,  
Where the saints had often trod.  
As the Soldier waited quietly,  
For the judgment of his God.*

*"Step forward now, you Soldier,  
You've borne your burdens well.  
Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets,  
You've done your time in Hell."*

*- Author Unknown -*