

DESERT THUNDER

The voice of Task Force Lightning



**TF Lightning assumes mission
in MND-N**



September 2006
Vol. 1, Issue 1

CONTENTS...



Photo by Pfc. Durwood Blackmon

Guidons face each other during a 9/11 remembrance and re-enlistment ceremony Sept. 11 at Contingency Operating Base Speicher. See page 18 for more.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika

On the Cover...
A Paratrooper from the 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division talks with children in the city of Samarra, Iraq, Sept. 5.

- 3 Lightning 6 Sends
- 4 Lightning 7 Sends
- 5 Changing of the Guard: 101st hands off to 25th
- 6 25th Combat Aviation Brigade takes charge
- 8 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division arrives in Kirkuk
- 9 3rd of the 82nd takes left seat
- 10 3rd Iraqi Army Division takes the lead in Ninawa Province
- 11 خطوة اخرى بالاتجاه الصحيح
- 12 Iraqi prime minister visits Tal Afar
- 13 Iraqi Army noncommissioned officers learn new leadership skills
- 14 Center photo spread: "Paying tribute to the fallen"
- 16 Captain recalls WTC scene on Sept. 11
- 18 25th Combat Aviation Brigade holds mass reenlistment on Sept. 11
- 20 BSB keeps Stryker Brigade rolling
- 21 Health and Fitness: Alternative remedies for muscle injuries
- 22 Soldiers celebrate Hispanic heritage
- 23 Iraqi soldiers get Infantry training in Mosul
- 24 Mail provides morale boost from home for deployed Soldiers
- 26 Soldiers at Speicher pick up the guitar

Desert Thunder

TF Lightning CG
Maj. Gen. Benjamin Mixon

TF Lightning CSM
Command Sgt. Maj. Jerry Taylor

TF Lightning PAO
Lt. Col. Michael Donnelly

Public Affairs NCOIC
Sgt. 1st Class David Rhodes

Editor-in-Chief
Staff Sgt. Tyrone Marshall

Assistant Editor
Spc. Daniel Bearl

Contributors
3rd HBCT, 4th ID PAO
3rd IBCT, 25th ID PAO
25th CAB, 25th ID PAO
3rd BCT, 82nd AD PAO
133rd MPAD
138th MPAD

Desert Thunder is published monthly by Task Force Lightning Public Affairs Office, HHC DIV (PAO) 25th STB, Unit #72111, COB Speicher, APO AE 09393, DSN 856-0218.

Desert Thunder is an authorized publication of the Department of Defense. It is distributed free to members of Task Force Lightning. Circulation is 10,000.

Contents of *Desert Thunder* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. Government or the Department of the Army.

Editorial content is the responsibility of the Task Force Lightning Public Affairs Office.

Lightning 6 Sends



A warm Aloha to all Task Force Lightning Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines. The next 12 months will be a significant event in your lifetime. I would like to take a few moments to convey to you my intent for the year to come, which applies to every member of Task Force Lightning – from private to major general.

First, we work in a very dangerous environment and there is an enemy who is determined to bring harm to Coalition Forces in Iraq. We must be vigilant in our attention to detail and not become complacent. Each and everyday you must remind yourself that the enemy may strike when you least expect it. Stay alert!

Next, I want to make sure you understand what I expect you to execute in the near term. Our overarching theme will remain respect; this applies to the Iraqi people and their culture. You must understand the environment in which we work and know the culture. We must also build relationships and establish networks with those in our respective fields. Get to know your counterparts. Together we will be stronger and more effective in accomplishing our mission. Remember the TF Lightning motto “One Team, One Mission – security for Iraq’s people.”

Your presence is another powerful message to the world about the honor and courage of

our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines. Our coalition allies, the Iraqi Army, police and security forces will continue to build a safe and secure Iraq.

The Tropic Lightning Division Headquarters, our Brigade Combat Teams from 2nd Infantry Division, 4th Infantry Division, our own 25th Infantry Division, 82nd Airborne Division, and our separate supporting brigades and battalions are proud to be here as we continue the mission of transitioning more terrain into the hands of the Iraqi Army, police and security forces. Our mission is clear: provide our Iraqi friends and counterparts the assistance they need to take over their own security and create a safe and secure environment so the Iraqi people can live a free, prosperous and terror-free life.

Over the next 12 months we will continue to put Iraqi units in the lead. Iraqi forces will plan, lead and execute day to day security missions with our support. We will stand with and beside them, and are proud to serve with these honorable men.

We are also grateful for the opportunity to work closely with the esteemed political and law enforcement officials in Northern Iraq. This partnership is vital if we are going to attain our joint goals.

Our values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage will continue to drive our actions as guests in this country. Live the Army Values and Warrior Ethos while complying with General Order No. 1.

I pledge the full support of TF Lightning in returning the security and control of this country back to Iraqis. Jointly, our ultimate goal is an Iraq free of the threat of terrorism where its citizens can live their daily lives in a safe, free and prosperous Iraq while being confident that they can attain their goals and dreams for their children.

TF Lightning is present and ready to accomplish our mission with our Iraqi counterparts – security for the Iraqi people. I am proud and honored to be your commander. Tropic Lightning!

“One Team, One Mission – Security for Iraq’s people.” 🇺🇸



Lightning 7 Sends

Welcome to all the members of Task Force Lightning. After many months of training, planning, resourcing and preparation, the moment has arrived for us to assume control of Multinational Division North (MND-N).

As TF Lightning settles into our operational rhythm, we must remember our purpose here. We are here to train the Iraqi Army, security forces and police to be efficient, self-sustaining forces. This will provide the citizens of Iraq with the future they deserve in a free, prosperous society.

We must put well-trained Iraqi forces in the lead. By allowing them to demonstrate their proficiency and lethality against anti-Iraqi forces, it helps solidify and unite the country against those that wish to harm Iraqi citizens, Coalition and Iraqi forces, and stunt the political process. It will deny terrorist safe havens from which they can plan and conduct their murderous acts.

Mission success is dependent on all leaders and Soldiers maintaining situational awareness on and off COBs, incorporating the risk management process in all we do, and conducting thorough Pre Combat Checks and Pre Combat Inspections. Maintain muzzle awareness at all times. Use equipment correctly. Don't take shortcuts. Stay ready at all times. Ensure gunners are utilizing name tape defilade. All personal protective equipment (PPE) must be routinely inspected, at the ready, and used correctly.

Tactical leaders and convoy commanders must utilize the proper procedures. Ensure Soldiers

have all the resources necessary, such as combat life saver bags and nine-line medevac cards. All Soldiers must be well-briefed prior to missions so they know call signs, radio frequencies and other critical information to save lives.

Every operation includes a thorough rehearsal prior to SP. Every member must know what to do during break downs, contact with the enemy and other emergencies that may arise. Remember the TTPs you were trained on and execute them with precision.

Lastly, I would like to focus on Escalation of Force (EOF) procedures. Every Soldier in TF Lightning must know these procedures and execute them correctly. We cannot afford to make mistakes. Not only can it cost lives, but it deteriorates our credibility in the eyes of the Iraqi people. The process of EOF is designed to reduce the unnecessary loss of life while safeguarding our Coalition Forces, our Iraqi partners and Iraqi citizens. Every leader and Soldier must be fully proficient on EOF procedure.

TF Lightning is highly trained, equipped with the best equipment available, and ready for the mission. Along with the IA and IP, we will continue our mission of providing the Iraqi people a secure and terror-free country. We will help change the lives of the Iraqi people and continue the legacy of America's premier fighting forces. Tropic Lightning!

"One Team, One Mission –security for Iraq's people." ♥



Maj. Gen. Thomas Turner, commanding general, 101st Airborne Division and Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe, case the 101st Airborne Division's colors during a Mission Assumption Day ceremony at Contingency Operating Base Speicher.

Department of Defense Photo

Changing of the Guard

101st AD hands off to 25th ID

STORY BY SPC. MICHAEL PFAFF
133RD MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT

TIKRIT, Iraq — The 25th Infantry Division uncased its colors, accepting responsibility for operations in Multi-National Division North Iraq from the 101st Airborne Division during a mission assumption ceremony Sept. 12.

The 25th Infantry Division and Task Force Lightning, which includes elements from the 82nd Airborne Division, 4th Infantry Division and 2nd Infantry Division, will continue the mission of transitioning areas of operation to the Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police and other Iraqi Security Forces in the region.

“Our mission here is clear,” said Maj. Gen. Benjamin R. Mixon, commander of the 25th Infantry Division and Task Force Lightning during the ceremony. “To provide our Iraqi friends and counterparts the assistance they need to take over their own security and create a safe and secure environment so the Iraqi people can live a free, prosperous, and terror-free life.”

Mixon then deviated from his prepared speech to speak “from the heart” to attending Iraqi dignitaries

and Iraqi Security Forces officers. He focused on maintaining the relationship between Coalition Forces and continuing efforts to secure the region and its people.

Also attending the event were Gen. George Casey, commanding general of Multi-National Forces in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, commanding general of Multi-National Corps in Iraq and Dr. Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq.

During their year-long tour in Iraq, the 101st Airborne Division and the Task Force Band of Brothers assisted two Iraqi Army Divisions in assuming responsibility for security in their provinces.

The other two Iraqi Army Divisions in the region are projected to assume responsibility for security in their provinces over the next three months with assistance from coalition forces.

The 25th Infantry Division will also focus on continuing the efforts of the 101st Airborne Division to help rebuild Iraq's infrastructure and further the democratic process.

The 101st Airborne Division will return to Fort Campbell, Ky., in order to prepare for its next “rendezvous with destiny.”

A welcome relief

New Aviation Brigade Takes Control of Air Operations in Northern Iraq

STORY AND PHOTOS BY

SGT. 1ST CLASS MICHAEL MONTELLO
25TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

TIKRIT, Iraq — A Relief in Place ceremony was conducted Sept. 11 to transfer responsibility for air operations in Northern Iraq from the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) to the 25th Infantry Division.

The 25th Combat Aviation Brigade from Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, relieved the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, which has served at Contingency Operating Base Speicher since August 2005 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The 25th Aviation Brigade is no stranger to deployment, having supported the Global War on Terrorism in Bosnia in support of Operation Joint Forge in 2002, in Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom in 2004 and Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004. Elements of the brigade were also deployed to support humanitarian efforts for earthquake victims in Pakistan in 2005.

As part of the U.S. Army's transformation, the brigade was renamed the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade after reconfiguration and acquisition of two new battalions in 2005. The 25th CAB's mission is



Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division's Combat Aviation Brigade and Soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division's Combat Aviation Brigade display the colors during a Relief in Place ceremony at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.



Lt. Col. Jim Barker of the 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry participates in a Relief in Place ceremony transferring responsibility for air operations in Northern Iraq from the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade to the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

to provide air support to the 25th Infantry Division units, which have the larger mission of working by, through and with the Iraqi Security Forces in the interest of a safer and more secure Iraq.

“What I will view as success is our ability to help the Iraqi people in any way possible to stand up their abilities to defend themselves, secure the borders and create conditions for economic prosperity,” said Col. A.T. Ball 25th CAB commander. “One of my main goals during this rotation is I want the other brigade combat team commanders to feel the aviation support is responsive and flexible to meet their daily changing needs.”

The ceremony also marks the completion of the 101st CAB’s second deployment in three years. The 101st CAB supported the Global War on Terrorism in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from August 2003 to August 2004.

During the past year, the 101st CAB has accumulated more than 110,000 flight hours. By conducting recon missions and air assault missions supporting both Iraqi and U.S. forces.

“Not only am I proud of my Soldiers, but I would like to acknowledge the growth in professionalism, discipline and confidence in the Iraqi Army. They have made considerable progress in the last year,” said 101st CAB commander, Col. Warren Phipps. 🇮🇶



Sgt. Carlos Murray of the 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry carries a unit flag during a Relief in Place ceremony conducted at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, transferring responsibility for air operations in Northern Iraq from the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade to the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade.

Tropic Lightning “strikes” in Kirkuk

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SPC. MIKE ALBERTS
3RD INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM,
25TH INFANTRY DIVISION PUBLIC AFFAIRS

KIRKUK, Iraq — Worn by every 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldier, it can now be seen in the chow hall, Post Exchange and living quarters. It’s the 25th Infantry Division’s signature lightning bolt and Taro leaf patch.

Soldiers of 3rd IBCT transitioned into their new home in Iraq, replacing the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq.

“The 101st occupied this theater for the past year. It’s important for us, as a new unit in this territory, to understand their daily operations and routines,” said Capt. Brian Yanowski, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd IBCT. “The purpose of us being here with the 101st is to get them to show us the ropes, so to speak. We need information regarding the ‘ins and outs’ of the area, daily business and standard operating procedures that [have been successful for them],” said Yanowski.

The 1st IBCT had a wealth of knowledge to share with their Tropic Lightning friends. The transition of units into theater connected arriving Soldiers with their counterparts and preceded the formal transfer of authority that occurred this month.

“The 101st has worked to make things better, both economically and socially, in this area of operation,” said 1st Lt. Mark Welch, executive officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd IBCT. “We need to make sure that there is



Soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team disembark a C-130 Hercules moments after arriving at their new home in Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq, where the brigade will call home for the next year.

continuity with the people of this country. “We’re here now [in part] to understand how the 101st is driving their missions so that we’re not starting from scratch,” said Welch.

According to Welch, battle continuity is established by actually sitting down with one’s counterparts and developing a relationship so that the transition of job responsibilities from a garrison mentality to a wartime mission runs smoothly.

“Everything we can learn now before the 101st Soldiers leave is setting us ahead and helping to ensure that our mission here is a success,” he said.

“Our goal out here right now is simple,” said Sgt. Eric M. Howard, team leader, 2nd Battalion, 27 Inf. Reg., 3rd IBCT. “We’re getting together with our counterparts to gather intelligence about our equipment, our enemy and the operational tempo. We’re basically asking the

101st anything and everything that might help us with our mission,” said Howard.

Howard is one of several Soldiers serving a second tour in Iraq. He operated out of FOB Warrior during his first tour.

“I was here between January 2004 and February 2005,” he said. “The thing that has changed the most is the quality of our equipment. We are also now being more cautious, and the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Security Forces are playing a much bigger role in our operations.”

The value of the transition time before the formal transfer of authority between units occurred was of particular value to the younger Soldiers.

“Getting together with our counterparts is the most important thing about being here a little early,” said Sgt. Michael Anderle, veteran of a tour in Afghanistan and team leader, 2-27, 3rd IBCT. 🇺🇸

Right seat, left seat

STORY AND PHOTOS BY **SPC. JOSHUA R. FORD**
3RD BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION PUBLIC AFFAIRS

TIKRIT, Iraq — Driving down Main Supply Route Tampa, Sgt. Nate Everitt, squad leader, Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), pointed out areas to look out for improvised explosive devices to the unit that would replace his in Iraq.

Paratroopers from Battery A, 1st Bn., 319th Airborne Field Artillery Reg., 3rd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., listened attentively while Everitt continued to point out small villages on either side of MSR Tampa and what his unit had encountered in the past year with the inhabitants of each village.

Later the mounted patrol pulled into a small town on the outskirts of Tikrit where the Soldiers dismounted their vehicles. They were immediately greeted by cheerful children while the convoy commander asked the village elders and religious leaders if they had noticed any suspicious activity in the town or surrounding areas.

“These guys like us,” Everitt turned and said to Paratroopers of the 319th AFAR. “Not all the villages and towns are like this one though.”

This was all a part of the right and left seat rides to familiarize the Paratroopers with the area they will soon take over.

The outgoing Soldiers of the 101st have been showing their 82nd counterparts the way around what is soon to be Task Force Panther’s area of responsibility. Soon, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Abn. Div., will hand off their battle space of Northern Iraq to the paratroopers of 3rd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div.

The right-seat ride requires a unit to show an incoming unit around their area of operation before redeploying, said Staff Sgt. Raymond St. Louis, squad leader, Battery A, 1st Bn., 319th AFAR Reg.

“During the right-seat ride, we’ve shown the 319th guys hot spots, and introduced them to the key leaders of each city, town and village,” said Everitt.

Soldiers from the 101st have done an excellent job showing their 82nd counterparts around the



Sgt. James Copeland, squad leader, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, pulls security during a patrol near Tikrit.

area of operation, said 1st Lt. Ronald M. Kubacki, platoon leader, Battery A, 1st Bn., 319th FA.

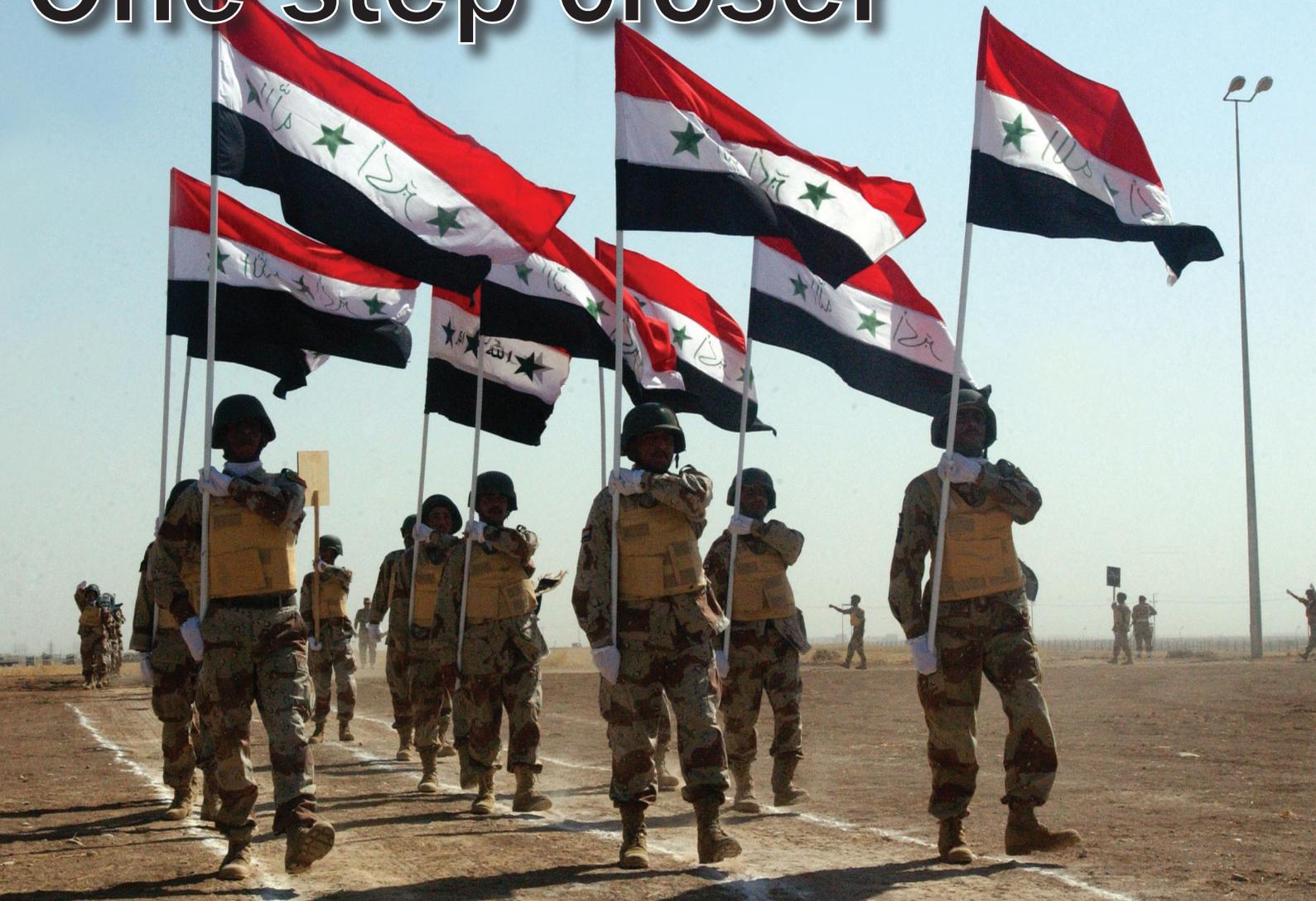
“Obviously you don’t want to throw us out there to do nothing. So for them to actually give us the opportunity to get out there and ride with them and see how it goes, you start to get comfortable with learning the area a little bit,” Kubacki added. “It also gives us a chance to pick up on good standards and tactics that worked for them while they were here.”

After a week of learning the ins and outs of the Salah Ad Din Province, paratroopers from the 319th AFAR took over for the left-seat ride. It was now up to the 82nd Paratroopers to prove they had a grasp on what they’d learned the week prior.

One noncommissioned officer from the 101st sat in each vehicle during the left-seat ride monitoring the Panthers to make sure they have a good grasp on the area and what to do in certain situations.

“The left-seat ride was certainly different because we got out there not knowing the area too well. It was a big shock to us trying to get around,” said Kubacki. “But being out there, the guys start to get used to it and feel more confident, and by the end everybody feels comfortable with it.” 🇺🇸

One step closer



STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC. YOLANDA MORENO LEON
138TH MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT

AL KISIK, Iraq — Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division celebrate another benchmark in history by providing security for their country without coalition support.

The 3rd IA Div. assumed responsibility for yet another part Iraq during a Transfer of Authority ceremony held at Al Kisik, Iraq on Aug. 30.

“The Iraqi Army can effectively protect and control these areas,” said Maj. Scott Baum, advisor, Military Transition Team, Iraqi assistance group, 3rd IA Div.

“Today we are transitioning authority from coalition forces to 2nd Bn., 1st Bde., 2nd IA, who will now be responsible for a certain area here in northern Iraq, Ninawa Providence.”

According to Baum, the IA is ready and can effectively operate within its area of responsibility to help keep Iraqi civilians safe and help them rebuild a new Iraq.

“This is the official ceremony where we say the IA battalion is well trained to take over the fight themselves and we will just support them,” said Col. Steve Townsend, commander, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. “The Soldiers of the IA are improving every day.” 🇮🇶

Soldiers from 2nd Brigade 1st Battalion 3rd Iraqi Army Division march during their Transition of Authority ceremony. Guest speakers were Brig. Gen. Rickey L. Rife, 101st Airborne Division, Brig. Gen. Francis Wiercinski, 25th Infantry Division, and Maj. Gen. Khorsheed, commander, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, in Al Kisik, Iraq.

خطوة اخرى بالاتجاه الصحيح



جنود من الفوج الثاني للفرقة الثالثة العراقية يستعرضون اثناء مراسم تسليم الملف الامني والعسكري لمدينة الكسك, العراق, وذلك بحضور اللواء ريكي ايل رايف من الفرقة 101 المحمولة جوا واللواء فرانسيس ويرسنسكي من الفرقة 25 لمشاة الجيش الامريكي والعميد خورشيد قائد الفرقة الثالثة للجيش العراقي.

التحالف الى الكتيبة الثانية للفوج الاول من الفرقة الثالثة العراقية والتي تنتشر حاليا قطعاتها في مناطق معينة من محافظة نينوى الشمالية". وطبقا لما صرح به باوم فان الجيش العراقي حاليا يتمتع بجهوزية وكفاءة فاعلة للعمل ضمن منطقة عملياته وبالشكل الذي يحافظ على امن المدنيين وسلامتهم ويمكنهم من اعادة بناء عراقهم الجديد. وعن هذه الاحتفالية قال العقيد ستيف تاونسيند القائد في الفوج القتالي الثالث سترايكر " ان الغرض من هذه المراسم الرسمية هو الاعلان عن ان الكتيبة الثانية العراقية مدربة بشكل جيد ومؤهلة للقتال وان مهامنا الحالية لتقتصر على مد يد العون والاسناد لها عندما يطلب منا ذلك. كما ان هذه المراسم لتشير الى التقدم الذي يحرزه الجيش العراقي في اداء مهامه الامنية والعسكرية يوما بعد يوم." ❗

قصة كتبها والتقط صورها والتقط صورها الاختصاصية: يولاندا مورانو ليون دائرة التوجيه السياسي 138 المتنقلة

الكسك،العراق- احتفل جنود الكتيبة الثانية من الفوج الاول للفرقة الثالثة للجيش العراقي بحدث يشكل انعطافه اخرى في تاريخ العراق الجديد, حيث تسلمت الفرقة الثالثة العراقية المسؤولية الامنية والعسكرية لجزء اخر من المنطقة الشمالية وذلك اثناء احتفالية تسليم عسكرية خاصة جرت في الكسك في 30 اب الماضي. وعن هذا الحدث الهام قال الرائد سكوت باوم المستشار في فريق التحول العسكري, من مجموعة الدعم للفرقة الثالثة" ان الجيش العراقي قادر وبشكل فاعل على السيطرة وحماية هذه المناطق. وان هذه الاحتفالية لتشير الى نقل المهام الامنية والعسكرية بشكل فعلي من قوات

Iraqi PM visits Mosul



The Prime Minister of Iraq, Nouri Al Maliki, arrives at Forward Operating Base Diamondback, Mosul, Iraq, Sept. 4.

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. DENNIS GRAVELLE
138TH MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT

MOSUL, Iraq — The Iraqi prime minister, Nouri al Maliki, was greeted by elected leaders and Iraqi Security Force leaders of the Ninawa Province at Forward Operating Base Diamondback, Mosul, Iraq Sept. 4.

The Iraqi prime minister made the visit to Mosul to meet with local leaders and discuss issues at Mosul's Provincial Hall.

"The purpose of his visit was to make contact with provincial authorities, the Provincial Council, traditional leaders, opinion leaders, and key security forces commanders to better understand provincial citizens' concerns and priorities," said Dr. James Knight provincial team leader. "More than 100 such individuals were present, not including press and security details."

Maliki and the other dignitaries were then escorted from Mosul Airfield by ISF to Provincial Hall

where they discussed local issues such as reconstruction and security.

Maliki also stressed that he was determined to address the needs of the people and assure national unity in Iraq.

According to Knight, the prime minister noted the importance of Iraqi unity and equality of all Iraqis, as well as the urgency of economic growth.

Local leaders were able to ask the prime minister about the general improvements in security in Mosul and Tal Afar and the effectiveness of ISF. Local leaders also brought up the positive relationship between the governor's office and Provincial Council, and briefed the prime minister on the present fuel shortages, and water shortages in Mosul and Tal Afar.

Maliki promised the elected leaders that he would bring all their concerns to each relevant ministry. This visit marks the first time that Maliki has met with the leaders of Ninawa in an official capacity. ❤️

Gov. praises Tal Afar

STORY BY SGT. DENNIS GRAVELLE
138TH MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT

TAL AFAR, Iraq — The elected governor of Ninawa, Duriad Kashmoula, visited Tal Afar, Iraq after a year-long absence meant to showcase Tal Afar's new-found security and developing economic prosperity.

Tal Afar was once a terrorist stronghold with insurgent groups having total freedom of movement throughout the city. The last visit by Kashmoula to the city came just prior to Operation Restoring Rights which occurred in September 2005.

The 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment along with Iraqi Security Forces conducted the operation to restore order in Tal Afar and arrest insurgents.

"Insurgents chose to put the headquarters in Tal Afar two years ago because they knew they could cause chaos in the town by putting Shia against Sunni and against the Kurds," said Kashmoula. "They also knew that it was a good first stop to and from Syria."

According to Kashmoula, Tal Afar is a good example of progress in many areas, especially security, and now municipal services. The hard work and efforts of Mayor Najim has completely turned this city around, he said.

"This town gives us hope for all of Iraq," said Kashmoula. "We all need to forget what happened in the past and look to the future. We must do this for the children of Tal Afar."

Kashmoula said he wanted people living in Mosul to know

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

Iraqi Soldiers learn to be better NCOs

STORY BY PFC. PAUL J. HARRIS
3RD HEAVY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM
4TH INFANTRY DIVISION
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

MUQDADIYA, Iraq — Noncommissioned officers furiously take notes on their booklets as these 3rd Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Iraqi Division soldiers received a lesson from coalition forces on how to be better leaders.

In dealing with the Iraqi Army on a consistent basis, Command Sgt. Maj. David List, command sergeant major, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, noticed the Iraqi NCOs were more of a go-between for officers and junior enlisted, instead of demonstrating a proactive authoritative position of their own.

As a result, List sat down with Col. Brian Jones, commander, 3rd HBCT, over the course of two weeks and developed a nine-page manual in Arabic for Iraqi NCOs to reference during their training at the NCO Academy at Forward Operating Base Normandy.

“We did not want to make it a carbon copy of the American Army,” List said. “What I want to push forward to them is that they need to show that their officers can trust them with responsibility and leadership instead of taking charge of everything and going right around them.”

In his brief, List decided to hit upon three core fundamentals of NCO leadership.

“Duties, responsibilities and authority are three things a noncommissioned officer needs to know.



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Montano

Above: Command Sgt. Maj. David List, command sergeant major, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, speaks to Iraqi noncommissioned officers from 3rd Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Iraqi Division on how to better themselves at the NCO Academy at Forward Operating Base Normandy near Muqdadiya, Iraq.



Left: List listens to the concerns of Iraqi noncommissioned officers from 3rd Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Iraqi Division at the NCO Academy at Forward Operating Base Normandy near Muqdadiya, Iraq.

Paying Tribute ...



Photo by Spc. Daniel Bearl



Photo by Spc. Daniel Bearl

Above and left: Soldiers with the 25th Infantry Division take a few minutes from their busy day to observe a moment of silence in remembrance of Sept. 11. Task Force Lightning Soldiers working at Division Main at Contingency Operating Base Speicher observed the moment at 4:46 p.m., which coincided with the 8:46 a.m. Eastern Standard Time at which the first aircraft struck the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001.



Photo by Pfc. Carlee Ross

Above: A Soldier from the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) salutes during the playing of taps at the end of a 9-11 remembrance ceremony on Contingency Operating Base Speicher.



Photo by Pfc. Carlee Ross

Right: Maj. Gen. Thomas Turner, commander of Task Force Band of Brothers, commander of 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) speaks of Sept. 11, 2001 during a remembrance ceremony on Contingency Operating Base Speicher.

Below: A Soldier with the 101st Airborne Division bids farewell to a fallen comrade during a memorial service at Forward Operating Base Warhorse on Sept. 11.



Department of the Army Photo



Captain survives WTC, Fights War on Terror

Thomas Sullivan, 773rd Transportation Company, gearing up for a fuel supply mission

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC. KYNDAL HERNANDEZ
45TH SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FORWARD OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq — Five years after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, an Army captain and World Trade Center survivor, commands a New York unit deployed to Iraq. Capt. Thomas Sullivan, commander of the 773rd Transportation Company at Q-West experienced the attacks on the World Trade Center from the 95th floor of the South Tower. He and Soldiers from this New York Reserve unit will participate in a

remembrance ceremony in honor of the victims of Sept. 11. Sullivan worked for Fiduciary Trust Company International as a performance analyst since 1996. Until Sept. 11, 2001, the company’s office occupied four floors of the South Tower. On that day, Sullivan arrived at work at 7:30 a.m. just like any other day, but a broader smile may have revealed he had good news to share. “I had gone into my office to send out e-mails to friends and family members to tell them the news that my wife was pregnant with twins,” Sullivan said.

After clicking the “send” key, he made his way to his boss’ office to share the exciting news with him. “As we sat there in his office laughing and joking,” Sullivan explained. “I noticed something out of the corner of my eye.” At that moment – about 8:46 a.m. – the first plane hit the North Tower. “We both jumped to the floor, and I could feel the concussion and the heat immediately,” Sullivan said. As the deputy fire warden for his floor, Sullivan instinctively began evacuating all personnel



on his floor after the explosion.

Within minutes his section was clear, and Sullivan made his way to the stairwell. He began his descent running and jumping down the stairs.

Sullivan was 30 floors closer to escape – on the 65th floor stairwell – when the second plane hit the South Tower just 13 stories above him.

“The building shook unbelievably. I could feel a subtle burst of warm air and light debris and dust coming down the stairwell.”

By then, a throng of people poured into the stairwell for the long journey to the ground floor. But when they finally made it, they could not exit the building because of falling debris.

Along with the crowd, Sullivan turned back to the stairwell in hopes of finding another exit through the basement.

“When we finally exited the building, there was fire, smoke and debris everywhere,” Sullivan said. “I told my coworkers that I was going to head to the Staten Island Ferry.”

A few minutes after he made it to the street, the South Tower began to collapse.

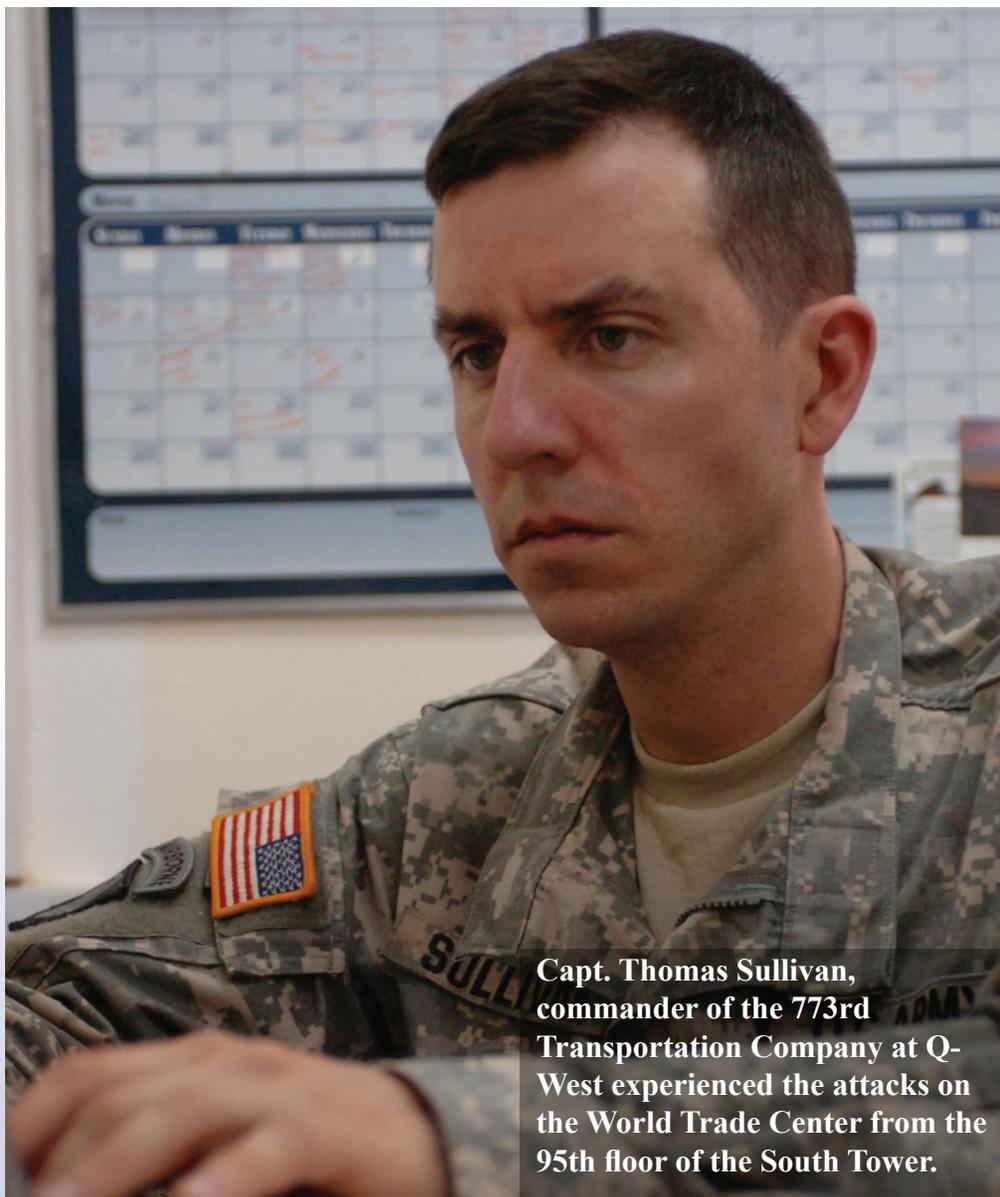
“When the building started to collapse, I started to run but the thick cloud of dust that came made it very difficult to see and breathe,” Sullivan said.

He made it to the Staten Island Ferry but to his dismay, it was closed.

Like thousands of other people, he began walking toward the Brooklyn Bridge for the long journey home.

“As we were walking to the bridge, the North Tower collapsed. It collapsed right in front of our eyes.”

After walking about eight



Capt. Thomas Sullivan, commander of the 773rd Transportation Company at Q-West experienced the attacks on the World Trade Center from the 95th floor of the South Tower.

miles, Sullivan found a phone to call his family. He said it had been more than two hours since anyone had heard from him. His family had feared the worst.

“The next few days were worse than the event itself,” Sullivan explained. “I had received dozens of calls from my friends’ and coworkers’ family members, asking if I had seen their loved ones.”

Months later, Sullivan continued to have trouble coping with the tragedy he had been through.

“I went to ground zero once to

assist, but I could not bear it for too long. They seemed to have all the help they needed, and I was not up for the task physically or mentally.”

Sullivan said it took him a few months to deal with the events that transpired that day.

“My service to this country and being here on the memorable day of Sept. 11 is how I honor the people who lost their lives that day. That was a day that should be remembered forever, a day we as Americans should pay tribute to, and a day that I will never forget.” 



Reaffirming commitment

Nearly 200 Soldiers take reenlistment oath on historic Sept. 11th



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
PFC. DURWOOD BLACKMON
TASK FORCE LIGHTNING PAO

TIKRIT, Iraq — Lurking behind a formation of eager Soldiers, helicopters shadowed 177 members of Task Force Wings who took their oath of reenlistment at a ceremony held for them Monday, Sept. 11th at Contingency Operating Base Speicher.

Soldiers from Task Force Wings, which consists of the 25th Infantry Division Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Battalion, 82nd Attack Reconnaissance Battalion and 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, as well as Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry (Mechanized), Ridge Runners from West Virginia, were present.

As friends and honorary guests took their seats, the 25th Tropic Lighting Band played music and

provided a warm welcome for all who attended.

Col. A.T. Ball Jr., commander of the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division administered the oath of reenlistment and expressed his appreciation for those who took the oath on such a historic day.

“Exactly five years ago today we endured the most horrific attack on our nation that anyone can imagine. All of you here today, along with your families back home, know the significant difference you have made in our world,” Ball continued, “These are the leaders of our Army for tomorrow, we should be encouraged by their commitment and sacrifice in the face of impending danger and uncertainty.”

Guest speakers at the event also commended the men and women who chose to continue serving their country during a time of conflict.

“When you do a re-enlistment deployed in a combat zone, it really says something about the man or woman. When you do that reenlistment deployed in a combat zone, on Sept. 11th., that gets you in the heart. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. It’s been an honor and privilege to serve with you,” said Brigadier General Frank Wiersinski, Assistant Division Support Commander, 25th ID.

During the ceremony, Soldiers in formation were asked to turn around and look at a United States flag.

The flag was suspended from a hydraulic mechanical arm to replicate how it was displayed after the Twin Tower attacks on September, 11th 2006.

“That’s exactly the way the flag looked five years ago when fireman hung it on a piece of scrap metal on what used to be the Twin Towers of New York City. I want you to remember



that for the rest of your life. That's not going to happen again in our country because of people like you," said Wiersinski.

The connecting fibers of all members in the Army are linked together by the words in the Soldier's Creed.

Although Soldiers have a deep-seated commitment to duty and service, every Soldier has his or her own personal reasons for choosing to stay in the Army.

"I reenlisted because I knew that this is something I wanted to do. My family has a big background in the military. So I figured why not me too," said Specialist Sharron Hayes, Human Resource Specialist, 3rd Battalion, 25th Aviation Brigade.

For Soldiers who were in the Army during the Sept. 11th attacks, the ceremony tugged at their hearts and made them very proud to answer the call to service.

Specialist James Dawes, crew chief specialist, Alpha Troop, 2nd Battalion, 6th Cavalry Regiment, 25th ID, was supposed leave Advanced Individual Training on Sept. 11, but the base was locked down. That was his prime motivation for reenlisting he says.

"I am proud." Said Dawes.

Soldiers were also impressed with the planning and organization that went into the event.

"It was a really nice ceremony, I really liked it. It was very encouraging and motivating. They had Blackhawk and Chinook helicopters, the U.S. flag and music playing. It was very nice," said Hayes.

On a historic day in America, the 177 reenlisting Soldiers at COB Spiecher raised their hands and took an oath to continue to

serve their country.

Those who reenlisted at the ceremony stood out as defenders of unyielding morale character to themselves, their families and their country.

"Those 177 Soldiers represent Americans from all walks of life. And that really reflects on our nation as a whole," said Command Sergeant Major Roger Kingston, Headquarters, Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th ID.

"That wasn't just 177 Soldiers

out there today" Kingston continued, "that was 177 Americans saying they believed in our countries pursuit of democracy, and safety thought the world. And especially back home, by being here and serving in the Global War on Terrorism."

At the close of the event proud Soldiers, friends and guests congregated to share some cake, handshakes and a few laughs at the Tactical Operations Center. 🇺🇸



Colors were brought to present arms during a Sept. 11 remembrance and re-enlistment ceremony, Monday, Sept. 11 at Contingency Operating Base Speicher.

BSB keeps 'em rolling



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. 1ST CLASS STEVEN PETIBONE
138TH MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT

MOSUL, Iraq — When military vehicles break down, need maintenance or an engine overhaul, who does the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team turn to? The Brigade Support Battalion motor pool.

Thirty-seven wheeled vehicle mechanics from Fort Lewis, Wash. stationed at Forward Operating Base Marez, Mosul, Iraq, put in long days to keep more than 1200 pieces of equipment up and running for the 3rd SBCT and various other units.

“We do it all in support of the 3rd SBCT,” said Staff Sgt. Jesse Garcia, motor sergeant, Company B, 296th BSB. “We provide mechanical support for everybody.”

According to Garcia, after deploying to Iraq last July, Co. B was able to bring the overall operational rate of brigade assigned equipment from 64 percent to a current operational rate of 92 percent.

“This reflects on the hard work and dedication of the Soldiers

that work here,” said Garcia who is a resident of Chicago, Ill. “What’s more amazing is that the unit is currently [under strength.]”

Having an under-manned unit does not seem to deter Garcia and his crew.

In addition to working six and one-half days a week, they also perform guard duty at FOB Marez’s front gate, instruct Iraqi Soldiers on vehicle maintenance, and will go as far as Tal Afar to retrieve broken down military vehicles.

“One of the biggest obstacles is going out to do recovery of vehicles and other equipment because it takes at least four or five Soldiers from the motor pool,” said Garcia.

A note of importance that helps the 296th run like a well-oiled motor pool is the fact that Garcia and four non-commissioned officers and six junior enlisted Soldiers have been deployed to FOB Marez before.

“This gives the unit an advantage by having more control when reacting to situations,” said Garcia. “It also helps us reach our goal of making it a little bit better when we leave here.” 🇺🇸

Above: Soldiers at the 3rd Brigade Support Battalion motor pool perform level one maintenance on an M1114 HMMWV (Humvee).

Below: Pvt. Shawn Wachs disassembles a vehicle’s cooling system at the 3rd Brigade Support Battalion motor pool.



A holistic approach to healing

Spc. Matthew Stephens, an administration specialist with the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, receives acupuncture therapy.

Pfc. Bryanna Poulin
Task Force Lightning PAO

MOSUL, Iraq — Helping people live healthy, fulfilling lives after injuries can be challenging, especially in Iraq

One Physical Therapist from the Troop Medical Center at the Forward Operating Base Marez, Mosul, Iraq provides patients with a treatment strategy, along with educating them about preventing future injuries.

Maj. Erica Clarkson, Physical Therapist with 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, believes that exercise and educating people on proper lifting techniques plays a vital role for patients suffering from muscle injuries.

“Many people utilize medications when they have muscle pain; not realizing that medications only provide a temporary relief which only masks the dilemma,” Clarkson said.

The most common injury Clarkson notices among patients in deployed environments is back and neck pain resulting from improper lifting techniques.

People have a tendency to lift heavy objects with their back versus lifting with their legs, which puts a lot of pressure on the muscles in the back.

“A proper lifting technique is only one approach in preventing injuries,” Clarkson said. “It is also important that the human body receives ample rest because fatigue correlates with muscles not healing properly.”

Physical therapy is just one treatment option for people suffering from muscle pain grievances.

“There are numerous treatment options available to patients; it’s my responsibility to determine and evaluate what action is right for them,” she added. “Since every person is different, each evaluation is done on individual needs.”

Clarkson, whose background includes a Bachelor of Arts in Exercise Physical Therapy as well as a Doctorate in Acupuncture Therapy, determines if patients can benefit from other types of treatments including ultrasound, heat, diathermy, acupuncture, electrical stimulation, hydrotherapy, massage or spinal

manipulation.

“Prior to any scientific treatments being conducted I like to begin patients on exercise techniques that will strengthen and restore the injured muscle,” Clarkson said. “Exercise is sometimes the best medicine.”

It is important that physical therapy is coupled with education. This empowers patients to take charge of their own recovery through knowledge in posture, basic anatomy and physiology, body mechanics, stretching, strengthening, and conditioning exercises.

The best overall defense in preventing muscle injuries is practicing proper techniques and not overusing muscles beyond normal capabilities, Clarkson said.

“Soldiers in this type of environment (deployed areas) should pay closer to attention in not only using correct lifting techniques but also the importance of having good sleep and eating patterns as well,” Clarkson said. “In doing this, it counteracts any muscle injuries that are more prone to happen during a deployment.”

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage



PHOTOS BY SPC. JUAN JIMENEZ
25TH INFANTRY DIVISION PUBLIC AFFAIRS

TIKRIT, Iraq -- Soldiers at Contingency Operating Base Speicher celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month Sept. 16 with a night of music and dancing.

Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates the history and culture of the nations' Hispanic Americans.

It acknowledges the influence of Hispanic Americans on the politics, economy, social and cultural life throughout the United States.

Hispanic Heritage Month

begins on September 15, the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries: Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. In addition, Mexico achieved independence on September 16 and Chile on September 18.

The Hispanic Heritage celebration was first authorized as a week-long celebration by Public Law, approved on September 17, 1968. Two decades later, on August 17, 1988, the celebrations were expanded to a month by Public Law. ❤️



Soldiers teach basic infantry skills classes for Iraqi Army, Police

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. 1ST CLASS STEVEN PETIBONE
138TH MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT

MOSUL, Iraq — Low crawling through dust and dirt at the newly established Battle Academy on Forward Operating Base Marez, Mosul, Iraq, is one way to get 19 Iraqi Army soldiers and four Iraqi policemen to focus on basic infantry survival skills.

U. S. Army Soldiers from Company B, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, Fort Lewis, Wash, are training weekly rotations from the IA and the IP's basic individual and buddy movements for survival and recovery under fire.

“The purpose of us being here today is to train the Iraqi Security Forces and Iraqi police on how to perform individual movement techniques,” said Staff Sgt. Steven Wertman, Co. B, 5th Bn., 20th Inf. Rgt., and resident of Milton, Wash.

According to Wertman, their week-long training starts out with basic individual soldiering skills aimed at improving leadership by building better leaders.

Additionally, the IA soldiers and the IP's will be instructed on how to conduct traffic control check points and other troop leading procedures.

“They are grasping techniques quickly, working on hand signals and verbal commands for buddy team movement,” said Wertman.

Wertman went on to say that IP also need to be better trained because of the nature of the work they do in the cities. If they get shot at they will know how to react to it, take cover and move to be able to find the person



A soldier in the Iraqi Army kneels during survival skills training at the Battle Academy on FOB Marez, Mosul, Iraq.



An Iraqi Army soldier low crawls toward the direction of gunfire using sandbags for cover.

shooting at them. Company B prefers a smaller section of IP so there are enough officers patrolling the streets.

“The Iraqis are doing a really

good job,” said Wertman. “As long as we can support them, they’ll be able to take over their country and run it as well as it needs to be.” 🇮🇶

Mail call...



Pfc. Joshua Bailey, 394th A.G. Co., operates a forklift to pick up pallets of mail as Sgt. Jose Angulo, 394th A.G. Co., assists loading boxes at the post office on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SPC. MIKE ALBERTS
*3RD BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM,
25TH INFANTRY DIVISION PUBLIC AFFAIRS*

KIRKUK, Iraq — They're more than just papers in an envelope or stuff in boxes to Soldiers at war. For Soldiers thousands of miles away from their loved ones mail is their "little piece of home" in a difficult environment.

Soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team are settling into their homes away from home and now have the official "go" to begin receiving encouraging words and care packages here at Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq.

Priority mail arrives from the United States within seven to 10 days, and mail sent by ground will take approximately two weeks to reach its intended recipient. Soldiers sending mail can expect priority mail to reach the United States within 10 to 14

days and three and a half weeks if sent by regular ground service, according to 1st Lt. Christina Altamirano, postal officer, 3rd Battalion, 394th Adjutant General Company. Altamirano is a reserve officer who brought 18 Soldiers with her to Kirkuk in Oct. 2005 to handle the postal needs in the surrounding area of operation.

"We receive mail here at FOB Warrior regularly about four times a week at different times during the day," said Altamirano. She explained that her unit provides all the postal services and support not only at FOB Warrior but also at outlying camps and other FOBs north of Baghdad.

"Our most important function is to get mail to the Soldier," she said. "Mail is a sensitive thing. It's difficult to express its importance. To receive a package from home, even if it only contains a snack



Spc. John Souza, mail clerk, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, sorts his unit's mail every afternoon for later distribution to his company.

that you can't get here, or that piece of mail that says 'hey, we miss you.' It's like receiving a little piece of home."

"Out here there's not a whole lot to look forward to," said Staff Sgt. Tim Reynolds, non-commissioned officer in charge, 877th A.G. Co. "Some of the outlying FOBs don't have nearly the same recreational services that we do here at FOB Warrior. So what you get from home, whether it's food or entertainment, is very meaningful," said Reynolds.

In order to ensure that a Soldier actually gets the morale boost they need, Reynolds has some tips for family members sending mail. "If you send liquids be sure that they are well packaged. If they break in route, liquids ruin not only what's in your Soldier's box but also those around it. Also, use sturdy and fully packed boxes to avoid things getting crushed. Using the correct address is important as well," he emphasized.

Each battalion must have a designated mail clerk with the proper credentials to pick up mail from the post office. In fact,



Pfc. Joshua Bailey, 394th A.G. Co., operates a forklift to pick up pallets of mail as Sgt. Jose Angulo, 394th A.G. Co., assists loading boxes at the post office on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq.

each mail clerk must take the course here at FOB Warrior to pick mail up here. One of those clerks is Spc. John Souza.

Souza has been the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd IBCT mail clerk for three years. As a Soldier who has served in both Kosovo and Afghanistan prior to

deploying here to Iraq, he truly appreciates the significance of his responsibility.

"Soldiers deserve to get mail. The families many times can't get a hold of their Soldiers directly by phone or computer. Getting mail is the only way they can send us messages and other things we need," he said.

Sgt. Peter Green, FIRES noncommissioned officer in charge, HHC, 3IBCT, is one of hundreds of Soldiers who has received that unexpected morale boost when he needed it most.

"When we were in Afghanistan, we lived on a really small FOB with a [tiny] Post Exchange," said Green. "I went months wearing the same [rotation] of socks and t-shirts. That stuff wears out," he continued. "My wife got wind that things were pretty rough and I remember getting a box unexpectedly. Inside it was full of socks and T-shirts that she sent. Even the most basic things that may not seem like a big deal back in garrison mean the world [to Soldiers at war]." 🍷



Picking up the mail is no small chore for Spc. John Souza, mail clerk, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

Guitar lessons bring melody to an off key world

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PFC. CARLEE ROSS
TASK FORCE LIGHTNING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

TIKRIT, Iraq — Imagine coming home after a year-long deployment with a new skill, one that will enable you to serenade your loved ones and impress friends.

While many Soldiers would prefer to sleep or call home with the little time off available, for some learning to play the guitar can be just as refreshing.

“I was trying to find something they would participate in,” said Damon Zane, a civilian technician who has been working at the Main Recreation Morale Welfare Recreation (MWR) for about two years.

Damon created this class about a year and a half ago. Lack of funding forced him to buy guitars from Soldiers who were leaving and used guitars on the Internet. He donated the guitars to the MWR.

The money spent is worth a little down time for the service members, he said.

Damon, who taught guitar back home, says he teaches because he loves to see the looks on their faces when they find out the mystery to guitar playing.

“We make it a simple place around here,” said Damon, describing his method of teaching.

Whether he teaches beginners or intermediate players, they all learn the same thing from him, bar chords and power chords. This enables the service members to start playing songs their first night.

To Damon, teaching Soldiers who have never picked up a guitar before and showing them it’s not as hard as they thought it would be is very satisfying, he said.

Soldiers at all levels of ability attend Damon’s lessons. Some spend the entire class picking away on their first song. Then there are eager intermediates who pick Damon’s mind for more and more songs.

“I wanted to learn a little bit about pickin’ and grinin’,” said Air Force Maj. Benny Landfair, the 732nd Detachment 1 Expeditionary Mission Support Group (EMSG) commander who has been coming since he got here.

The students in the class use their experience and inexperience to bounce off of each other and learn new things.

“I have mechanic hands, so I rip everything up,” said Spc. Scott Anderson, an all wheel mechanic for Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) 627th Field Artillery Heavy Equipment Truck (HET), 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), while wondering why he couldn’t get much noise out of his guitar.

“It’s a stress release, takes them to another place,” Damon commented on why he believes Soldiers attend.

Many Soldiers wished they had more time to participate in events like this.

“I’ll be here next week, if I’m not on mission,” said Spc. Hugh Keisler, a truck driver for Company A, 82nd Brigade Support Battalion (BSB), 82nd Airborne Division, who picked up a guitar for the first time at the class.

The facilities on camp are a great place for service members and employees. The supervisors are really trying to improve this place, said Damon.

“The MWR support has been amazing, and free of charge,” said Landfair.

At the end of the lessons, they all walk away with smiles on their faces, having learned a little more about the guitar.

“Do we get to learn guitar smashing too?” Sgt. Clint Wagner asked, a communications specialist for HHC 627 Field Artillery HET 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), about next week’s lesson.

“I don’t plan on leaving, they are going to have to kick me out,” said Damon, adding he doesn’t plan on leaving Iraq until the Soldiers have gone home for good. ❤️

Iraqi soldiers learning finer points of leadership

FROM PAGE 13

Most of which was taken out of the NCO guide (Army Field Manual 22-7.7)."

At first the senior Iraqi NCOs were a bit resistant to the ideas List was suggesting. He said they would reply with the argument of, "We can't do that because our weapons are not as good, we can't do that because we have no medical supplies, we cannot do that because we cannot even wash our clothes."

Coalition forces have been a supply link to the Iraqi Army while the centralized government was being established. Now that a government is in place the hard process of weaning the Iraqis off coalition support is starting to take place.

"One of the big issues with the Iraqi Army is that they have no confidence in their AK rifle," List said. "They think the M-16 or the M-4 is the catch all to every single battle and that is not true. A guy trained well with an AK-47 can be as well trained as a guy with an M-4. They do not see that through leadership they see that through mechanics."

Though the Iraqi Army has had its share of challenges, improvement has been seen since the Iron Brigade returned to Iraq in winter 2005. In the beginning the Iraqi soldiers would wait to see what the coalition forces would do first before reacting, commented Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Montano, personal security detachment platoon sergeant and brigade master gunner, 3rd HBCT, 4th ID, who attended List's brief.

He noticed just last week the NCOs are starting to maneuver

“ A guy trained well with an AK-47 can be as well trained as a guy with an M-4. ”

COMMAND SGT. MAJ. DAVID LIST
3RD HEAVY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM,
4TH INFANTRY DIVISION

and organize their soldiers on their own.

They had come into contact with a roadside bomb and the Iraqi Army spotted suspected insurgents fleeing from the site. Montano said they quickly organized themselves to enter the elephant grass to capture the insurgents with proper coverage of their gun truck and were able to assault the objective without coalition forces telling them to do so.

At the end of List's briefing some of the Iraqi NCO's approached him to say thank you. "We will do our very best to instill this into our soldiers but if we cannot take care of our soldiers then we cannot accomplish any mission," an Iraqi soldier said to List.

"For me, that was 'they got it,' they understand if the soldier cannot take a shower when he comes off patrol, if he cannot clean his weapon, if cannot wash his clothes then they are not truly taking care of their soldiers and that is the whole thing," List said. "I am not trying to get them to sing *Kumbayah* but stick together." ♡

Security situation improving, says IA general

FROM PAGE 12

that Tal Afar was now safe and could easily welcome them back to the city.

"Our hearts and hands are open to the displaced people of Tal Afar to return to the town," said Najim. "Anti-Iraqi forces will tell you lies and produce propaganda about how bad the Iraqi Army and Iraqi police are. It is not true. Our forces treat all people with dignity and respect."

According to Brig. Gen. Qais, commander of IA forces in Tal Afar, the security situation is getting better.

"We are coming up with a plan to help the people of Tal Afar who are currently living in Mosul to return to Tal Afar," said Maj. Gen. Walthick, provincial chief of police. "Terrorists are trying to take Mosul, but the IP are fighting back. Those who refuse to come back to Tal Afar will then go on a list that will help us see who the terrorists are."

While on his visit Kashmoula met with local leaders who asked the governor questions about getting more teachers, increasing the water flow from Aski Mosul Dam, and returning the power situation to 18-20 hours per day versus the 12 hours per night.

Kashmoula said that the demand for power is much greater than supply but he would try to improve all municipal conditions. ♡

TASK FORCE LIGHTNING

WE WILL NEVER FORGET ...

July 11

Sgt. Irving Hernandez
1st Battalion,
17th Infantry Regiment
3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team,
2nd Infantry Division
New York, N.Y.



Aug. 20

Sgt. Gabriel Deroo
2nd Battalion,
3rd Infantry Regiment
3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team,
2nd Infantry Division
Paw Paw, Mich.



Sept. 3

Sgt. 1st Class Richard J. Henkes II
2nd Battalion,
3rd Infantry Regiment
3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team,
2nd Infantry Division
Portland, Ore.



Sept. 3

Pfc. Nicholas A. Madaras
1st Battalion,
68th Armor
3rd Brigade Combat Team,
4th Infantry Division
Wilton, Conn.



Sept. 6

Cpl. Jeremy R. Shank
2nd Battalion,
27th Infantry Regiment
3rd Brigade Combat Team,
25th Infantry Division
Jackson, Mo.



Sept. 13

Capt. Matthew C. Mattingly
1st Battalion,
17th Cavalry
3rd Brigade Combat Team,
82nd Infantry Division
Reynoldsburg, Ohio



“NEVER IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD HAS ANY SOLDIER SACRIFICED MORE FOR THE FREEDOM AND LIBERTY OF TOTAL STRANGERS THAN THE AMERICAN SOLDIER.”

- ZELL MILLER