

# Marne Focus

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Serving Task Force Marne and MND-Center



Sgt. Ernest Henry

**Sgt. Mike Jones, a personal security detachment member for Company C, 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, demonstrates room-clearing techniques to a platoon of Iraqi army soldiers during training aimed to reduce unnecessary accidents and injuries. See on page 4.**

## Meeting the neighbors

**New to the neighborhood, Headquarters troops patrol local suburbs**

Story by Staff Sgt. Samantha M. Stryker  
Task Force Marne Public Affairs

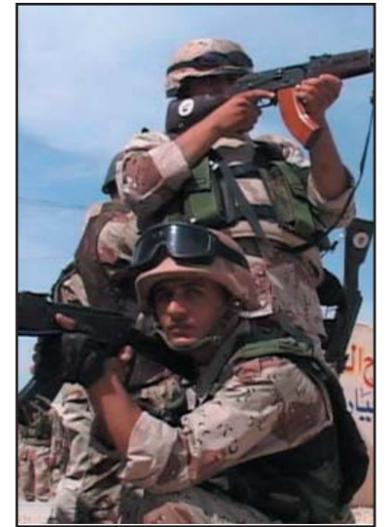
VICTORY BASE COMPLEX, Iraq - For some of the Soldiers it was like visiting a familiar neighborhood. For them returning to familiar Iraqi areas, those changes mean real progress.

For the Task Force Vengeance Soldiers patrolling the neighborhoods surrounding the Victory Base Complex, returning to the block means rebuilding friendships, maintaining trust and helping out your neighbor.

Soldiers with the Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, Special Troops Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division recently took over the responsibility of patrolling and assessing the general conditions of two villages just outside the walls of TF Marne's Baghdad base and patrolling in and around Baghdad International Airport.

"The unit we replaced had a good relationship with the people in the villages. I hope we can improve on that relationship," said platoon sergeant, Staff Sgt. Tony Lee, of Montgomery, Ala.

See **NEIGHBORS**, page 5



**Training Day for Iraqi army**

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**Leader takes part in joint patrol**

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## 1-89 Wolverines engage enemy, find IEDs

2 BCT 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) Public Affairs

AZ-ZAIDON, Iraq – Coalition Soldiers detained two suspected terrorists, found a cache, and seized a local vehicle after a small-arms attack May 29 near Az-Zaidon, Iraq, west of Baghdad.

Soldiers of the 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment 'Wolverines', 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, N.Y., were conducting counter improvised explosive device operations along a main Iraqi highway when they spotted a possible IED.

When the Soldiers followed the IED's command wire, they were led to a small shack, and a man ran from the building.

During the search for the man, the patrol encountered two local vehicles in the area.

As Soldiers approached, they were engaged with small-arms fire.

The troops returned fire and cleared a nearby house, where they

found another IED prepared for use.

One terrorist was killed in the firefight and another was wounded.

The Soldiers continued to receive small-arms fire but searched the vehicles, where they found a G-3 assault rifle, a rocket-propelled grenade launcher, a suitcase full of falsified identification papers, six cell phones, a plastic bag with a cordless phone, and a box of loose ammunition and AK-47 magazines.

Another vehicle approached at a high rate of speed, and the Soldiers disabled it with rifle shots.

Three men fled from the vehicle and the Soldiers found a 9mm pistol inside, but were unable to find the men.

Another pickup truck was searched, and the troops recovered a spool of copper wire and an empty spool as well as a rocket booster.

The pickup truck was taken to a coalition base for further exploitation.

The patrol evacuated the wounded man for medical treatment.



**'Rock' breaks, talks about being a legend**

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## Marne 6 sends

# During tough times professionals, friends, family, provide support network for troops

Sometimes I look around and I am simply amazed at what all our Soldiers, and for that matter, our Soldiers' Families are accomplishing. Indeed, these are extraordinary American citizens living in extraordinary times making extraordinary sacrifices.

Stress can be good. It drives us sometimes to do well, to push ourselves, and accomplish goals. When there is too much it can be destructive.

During a deployment it is natural to suffer a degree of stress. You see it in the behavior of others and you feel it in your own body. Left untreated or unresolved, it can cause physical suffering and it can be destructive.

You need to know that stress is normal and there are ways to combat it. So let's talk about stress.

Whether you are on deployment as a Soldier or a member of a deployed Soldier's Family you are susceptible to stress. It does not necessarily start the day you board an airplane or end when you are comfortably in the arms of your loved ones. Stress can appear at any time.

Many times people experience stress physically as headaches, backaches, pounding in your chest, upset stomach, and rapid breathing. More commonly, stress can lead to irritability, worrying, complaining, anger, swearing, yelling, and frustration.

People that are experiencing stress might isolate themselves, turn inward, and behave unpredictably.

Stress might also result from something you have seen, something you experienced, or arise from a change in your environment. It may result from any number of other external stimulants. More often than not, stress is the result of something that was not predicted. Regardless of what its cause, there is help available for people that are experiencing it.

First and foremost, leadership counts.

Leaders should be knowledgeable of every member of their team. This is as important at home as it is here in Iraq and Afghanistan. Leaders should build unit cohesion and pride. They should set conditions where physical fitness, rest, spiritual balance, and health are maintained.

Leaders should understand all the challenges a person in his or her charge is experiencing. Leaders should help establish predictability. They should set and maintain a climate of high ethical and moral conduct. Too often these standards fail when stress takes hold.

Most important is that a leader knows where to refer others if stress problems are too severe. They should create a climate where unit members are encouraged and supported, where there is no stigma assigned to a person that seeks help.

Health care professional, the unit medic, a chaplain or chaplain's assistant, mental health officers, NCOs, and specialists are available.

There is a superb web site that offers tips for coping with stress at [www.combatstresscenter.com](http://www.combatstresscenter.com). The site describes breathing techniques, exercises, and other coping skills. There are also a number of circulars for people that are experiencing stress or people that are concerned for others.

Which leads to a discussion of buddies.

You don't have to be a close personal friend to recognize that another is experiencing stress. Helping someone get through a stressful time might lead to friendship but knowing the person personally is not a prerequisite of helping a fellow human being. As a human being, a member of a team, you and I share responsibility in life to help our brothers and sisters.

It's easy. When you observe someone who is ex-



**Task Force Marne Commander,  
Maj. Gen. Rich Lynch**

periencing stress, reach out by asking the question. "Is something bothering you and how can I help?" Be ready to listen without judging. See where this takes you. And it may very well be necessary to ask for more help from a counselor or healthcare professional on behalf of your new buddy.

Certainly there is more that can be said about stress and the methods for coping with it.

Remember that stress is normal. Leaders should be watchful for it and capable of helping others with it.

Remember that you are not alone and there are plenty of people out there who are ready, willing and able to help you cope. And remember that we all have an obligation to help one another in these extraordinary times.

**ROCK OF THE MARNE!**



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## Combat Aviation Brigade Soldiers arrive in Iraq

CAB PAO

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq — Soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division's Combat Aviation Brigade arrived at Baghdad International Airport late May to begin their deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The 3rd CAB is based out of Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Ga.

The brigade will support the 3rd Infantry Division's operation in and around Baghdad, said Col. Daniel L. Ball, 3rd CAB commander. "We're here to support the surge policy put in place to quell the insurgency here in Baghdad," said Ball.

The CAB deployed from Hunter Army Airfield to Kuwait in early May mostly intact, leaving its 3rd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment behind. Working with the CAB in Baghdad is 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment of the 10th Mountain Division deployed from Fort Drum, N.Y.

The cavalry regiment brings a unique capability to the brigade, said Ball. The 3-17 CAV's OH-58D Kiowa Warrior scout helicopters, with advanced optics and sensors, give the CAV Soldiers the ability to better see the enemy in support of the brigade's operations, he said.

The 3rd CAB is normally made up of UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters, AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopters, and CH-47D Chinook helicopters.

This deployment marks the third time since 2003 that the CAB has deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The brigade's previous deployments were during the initial invasion into Iraq, and OIF III in 2005.

"We're continuing a proud tradition built by the Combat Aviation Brigade," Ball said.



Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills

**Spc. Kelly Steckler (left), Chief Warrant Officer Matt Spawn (middle), and Sgt. Cardone Nixon, A Co., 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment perform last minute preparations before flying north to Baghdad International Airport from Udairi Airfield, Kuwait.**

## 214th Fires BDE joins ranks of task force, bringing versatility, new capabilities

MND-C PAO

BAGHDAD — The 214th Fires Brigade became part of Task Force Marne April 26.

"The (3rd Infantry Division) has been extremely gracious in welcoming us," said Col. Peter Baker, 214th Fires Bde. commander. "Although we have only been here for a short time, it feels as if we have been part of the Marne Division for much longer.

"We are excited to be part of the Marne team and excited about the mission with 3 ID."

Because of the brigade's configuration, it has the ability to deploy and assume almost any mission.

"A fires brigade is a very versatile brigade. It is a great

example of modularity," Baker said. "The Fires brigade has the ability to 'plug and play' as needed in different divisions.

"One of the challenges we will face, as well as the families, is that we are very mobile in our assignments," he added.

While the, fires brigade is a relatively new organization to the Army, its capabilities are not, according to Baker.

The brigade has capabilities that are similar to those of a field artillery division and field artillery battalion. The brigade has also inherited new capabilities such as information operations, air defense and airspace management, psychological operations, and a fires and effects cell.

"With any newly created organization, it is founded on

new doctrine. This is a chance for us to develop new doctrine and to try different methods, but the basis is basic field artillery operations," Baker said.

"The brigade is more potent, more lethal, more dynamic, and self sustaining," he said.

The brigade certified its systems prior to its deployment to Iraq.

"The certification verified that we were able to deploy to do a fires brigade and a fires battalion tasks. The brigade was able to exercise its command and control processes and systems which is important for this deployment," said Baker.

"The timing was fortunate. All the lessons learned and the skills that were developed are still fresh with us."

## The search continues for Soldiers

MND-C PAO

RUSHDI MULLAH, Iraq — Coalition and Iraqi troops continue to search for two missing comrades who were abducted by terrorists after a complex attack in Quarhulli Village, Iraq May 12.

Soldiers of Company B, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Moun-

tain Division (Light Infantry) from Fort Drum, N.Y., and the 4th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division conducted Operation Polar Charade southwest of Rushdi Mullah, Iraq today to search for the missing Soldiers.

Nineteen suspected terrorists were detained during the operation.

The detainees were taken to a detention facility for further questioning.

# Paratroopers respond to IED threats

Story by Sgt. Marcus Butler  
4TH BCT (ABN), 25TH INF. DIV. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

BAGHDAD – The current weapon of choice used by insurgents against Coalition Forces is roadside bombs also called improvised explosive devices.

Adding armor to vehicles and educating service members of the current threat level and situation are all efforts to combat these hidden threats or avoid them altogether. Despite the efforts of new technology and individual Soldier training, avoiding each and every IED threat is nearly impossible.

The Explosive Ordnance Disposal Detachment is a team of specially trained Soldiers whose mission is to seek out and destroy IED threats found by service members patrolling Iraq's streets.

However getting them there to accomplish the mission safely falls on the shoulders of the tactical escort team from 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division.

Unlike most of the paratroopers with 1-40 CAV, who try to avoid these threats, these paratroopers load up in their vehicles and make their way toward the danger.

"Our mission is to provide security for the EOD and to allow them freedom of movement to investigate and destroy various types of IEDs," said 1st Lt. Luke Walsh, platoon leader and Columbus, Ga., native.

On call 24-hours a day, the tactical escort team conducts other types of missions in addition to escorting EOD.

"Along with EOD escort, my platoon conducts various other missions such as personal security detail for the squadron commander and serving as a quick reaction force when needed," said Walsh. "We are a very important asset to the squadron. We allow the Paratroopers to go out and conduct their mission without worrying about getting harmed in the process."

"I like being on the team since we help keep people safe," said Spc. Derek Townsend, a mortarman with the escort platoon and native of North Side Rogers Parks, Ill.

"It is a really adventurous job," said Sgt. John Leon McGhee, II, native of Birmingham, Ala., and medic for the EOD escort team. "It gives me comfort to know that when our team goes out and helps to destroy another IED, it is making Iraq a safer place for everyone."

"All of the Paratroopers on our team execute very well and without complacency. I feel as though I have some of the best Paratroopers in the entire Army," said Walsh. "I am one of the fortunate people that can fully trust their noncommissioned officers. I supply the task, conditions and standards and the NCOs execute to perfection."



**Paratroopers from 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division and Explosive Ordnance Detachment members sit inside their vehicles as an improvised explosive device is destroyed in a town south of Baghdad.**

Sgt. Ernest Henry



Sgt. Ernest Henry

**A squad of Iraqi army stack themselves against a wall prior to entering a house as part of training program with Soldiers at Base Hussaniyah.**

## Hands-on approach to training

Story by Sgt. Ernest Henry  
4TH BCT (ABN), 25TH INF. DIV. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

HUSSANIYAH, Iraq – A training program that teaches Iraqi soldiers tasks such as map reading skills and proper building clearing techniques was implemented by a young noncommissioned officer who wanted to reduce unnecessary accidents or injuries.

The idea came to Sgt. Mike Jones, a personnel security detachment member for Company C, 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division assigned to Forward Operating Base Hussaniyah when and his team partnered with the Iraqi army to secure a landing zone. His goal was to create a team that could work together seamlessly and to build trust.

"It started when we went to assist the Iraqi army secure a landing zone. We saw then (the differences in techniques), and started training them that week," said Jones, a native of Monroe, N.H. "We were going out on dismounts and we wanted to go out with people we felt secure with, so we've been training them ever since."

Jones' approach to teaching and mentoring has been so successful that other IA units in theatre are beginning to take notice.

"I've learned through trial and error, and ... I do a lot of hands-on training with them.

"I try to work with them independently so that each team can operate at their own level," said Jones. "It's been very effective and is being adopted by other IA units in theater."

After three months of training, the difference in the performance of the Iraqi soldiers can be seen inside and outside the wire.

Now the IA Soldiers are bounding backward, moving away from contact, moving toward contact, and are doing it in vehicles or dismounted, Jones said.

It started with a simple task to secure his base and after months of work, Jones has passed on years of training and experience to Iraqi army soldiers.

Sgt. Ernest Henry

**An Iraqi army soldier prepares to enter and clear a building as his instructor, Sgt. Mike Jones gives final instructions to the assault element.**



# Iraqi army nabs town's most wanted

Story by Capt. Robert Rossfeld

4TH BCT (ABN), 25TH INF. DIV. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

UBAAYDAT, Iraq – Iraqi army soldiers and Paratroopers joined forces to search for insurgents, weapons and information on the missing American Soldiers near Samarra, May 25.

Nearly 400 IA soldiers from the 2nd Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division lead more than 150 paratroopers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division during Operation Valdez.

“This operation is a big step for our Iraqi army counterparts,” said Military Transition Team 0820 Operations Officer, Capt. Tracy Trudell. “During our previous missions with the Iraqi army, MiTT advisers embedded with each Iraqi element. Today, we have Iraqi soldiers working hand-in-hand with other members of the 4-25. The ability of the Iraqi army to work with any American unit gives us greater operational flexibility.”

Not only did the IA provide Coalition Forces with greater flexibility, they demonstrated it as well.

“Our division commander directed that we perform this mission,” said the Iraqi Brigade’s Operations Officer, Maj. La’ith Jasim Alalwany. “This area is the responsibility of 6th Division, which works mainly in Baghdad. Due to their responsibilities inside Baghdad, we were ordered to search this area for terrorists and weapons.”

Iraqi soldiers captured three of the most wanted men in Babil province and detained 22 more people for questioning.

With the help of a local source, eight vehicles used to emplace improvised explosive devices were seized by the Iraqi army.

Illegal weapons were also found and seized, including several AK-47s, six mortar rounds, a sniper rifle and a bayonet.

Iraqi soldiers also took the opportunity to help in the search for the three missing American Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division.

During every conversation with local residents, Capt. Kadhum Abbas, a company commander with the IA asked for information on the whereabouts of the missing Soldiers.

“I believe these questions are important,” he said. “I would ask for help if my soldiers were missing, so it is my duty to help the American Army find their men.”



Capt. Robert Rossfeld

**Sgt. 1st Class Hugh Clark, a medic with MiTT 0820, and an Iraqi sniper pull security during Operation Valdez.**



**Iraqi soldiers question local residents to gain information on local militia members.**

Capt. Robert Rossfeld

## Soldiers, making good impressions in nearby towns



Staff Sgt. Samantha M. Stryker

**Staff Sgt. Tony Lee, HHSC, STB, 3ID, points to a future construction project near the Baghdad International Airport during a recent patrol.**

### NEIGHBORS, from page 1

Lee understands maintaining a good relationship with the Iraqis residing just outside the camp’s walls is important not only for security, but that it also builds mutual respect.

“Our goal is not just to perform presence patrols,” Lee said. “We attend local meetings, discuss economic-related issues and together with the local leaders are working to improve their living conditions.”

At each destination, Lee met with security personnel or self-appointed citizens that took up the call to work with Coalition Forces in keeping their neighborhood safe.

The Soldiers convoyed to the BIAP Business Center to meet with local contractors and Iraqi police to discuss security issues, entry control point protocol, and the renovation of buildings in the industrial part of the airfield.

While Lee and his Soldiers were there, they were told by an Iraqi police officer of the power outages in the villages because of the need for more electricity due to the recent high temperatures.

“The generators have been here since Saddam,” said Capt. Dhafer, the assistant commander of the Airport Village IP station, “Now we have more (appliances) in our houses and need more power.”

Contractors showed Lee which buildings they are eyeing for renovation and Lee was off again, leading his patrol through a labyrinth of turns and bends around the many compounds that skirt the walls of

the camps.

Electricity was not the only commodity in short supply. Once Lee and his team arrived at Airport Village, they spoke with Sammy, a local leader who is head of the airport council, about any new issues and followed-up on any issues already addressed by the coalition.

Sammy told the Soldiers about the low fuel issue that could affect the capability of their local Iraqi Security Force to respond or effectively patrol their areas.

The platoon draws on the skills and the experience of Soldiers from many occupational specialties.

Sgt. Antonio Velez, of Bridgeport, Conn., who served in Iraq in 2005, said he has seen changes in the people and improvements in their living conditions. Changes he says are for the better.

“I expected to see this much change,” Velez said referring to hard work the local residents have put into cleaning up their villages. He went on to say that their success depended on their determination.

Specialists Thomas Quimby of Lehigh Acres, Fl., and Johnathan Duncan, of Augusta, Ga., are both signal Soldiers with the platoon. Neither thought they would work directly with local residents helping them to live in a safer cleaner neighborhood.

“We are showing them they have to help themselves,” said Duncan. “By interacting with them they know we are here in they need help, but they have to improve Iraq, one neighborhood at a time.”

# MARNE TROOPS LEND A

*Soldiers volunteer at clinics, civil affairs troops work hand-in-*

**Story and photos by Sgt. Ben Brody**  
 Task Force Marne Public Affairs

Every Thursday, Task Force Marne Soldiers volunteer at a small clinic that provides free medical care to Iraqis.

The clinic, part of the Civil Military Operations Center near Camp Striker, attracts a steady stream of local adults and children.

“It fits my personality to get out there and do something to help the kids,” said Staff Sgt. Rick Skorik, Special Troops Battalion chaplain’s assistant. “Jesus talked about helping the poor, and that’s what we try to do at the clinic.”

According to STB Chaplain (Capt.) Ric Thompson, Soldiers, airmen and sailors from the U.S. as well as other coalition members, all take time to volunteer at the clinic.

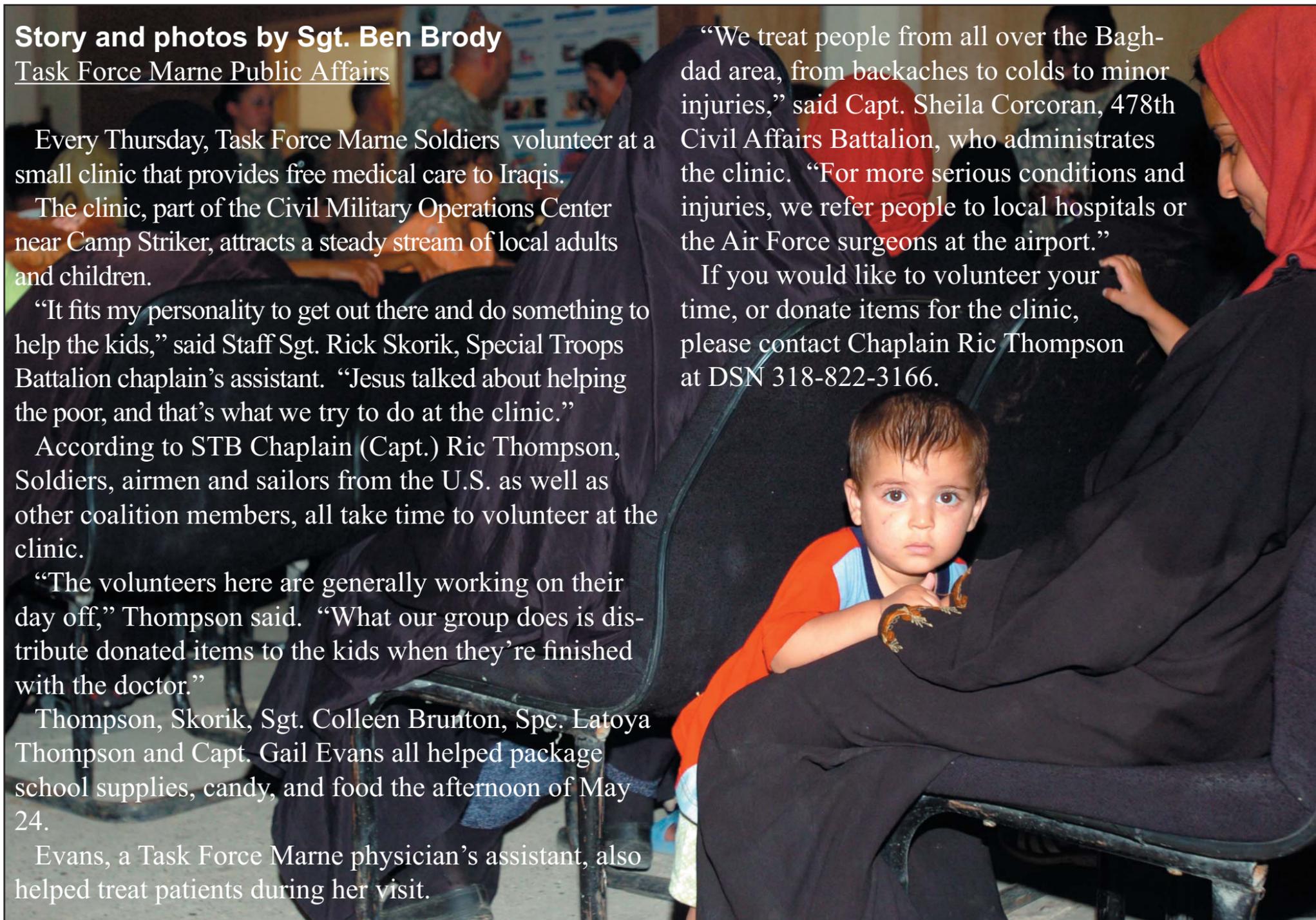
“The volunteers here are generally working on their day off,” Thompson said. “What our group does is distribute donated items to the kids when they’re finished with the doctor.”

Thompson, Skorik, Sgt. Colleen Brunton, Spc. Latoya Thompson and Capt. Gail Evans all helped package school supplies, candy, and food the afternoon of May 24.

Evans, a Task Force Marne physician’s assistant, also helped treat patients during her visit.

“We treat people from all over the Baghdad area, from backaches to colds to minor injuries,” said Capt. Sheila Corcoran, 478th Civil Affairs Battalion, who administrates the clinic. “For more serious conditions and injuries, we refer people to local hospitals or the Air Force surgeons at the airport.”

If you would like to volunteer your time, or donate items for the clinic, please contact Chaplain Ric Thompson at DSN 318-822-3166.



**ABOVE:** A young customer waits for free medical care at the Civil Military Operations Center at Camp Victory, May 24. The free clinic is open several times a week.

**RIGHT:** Capt. Gail Evans, 3rd Inf. Div., physician’s assistant, dresses an Iraqi man’s wound at the Civil Military Operations Center at Camp Victory, May 24.



An Air Force Tech Sgt. gives water to an Iraqi woman outside the Civil Military Operations Center at Camp Victory during a recent visit to the facility by Task Force troops.

# HELPING HAND

*hand with local residents*



Air Force Maj. Andrew Chontos treat an Iraqi woman for stomach pain at the Civil Military Operations Center at Camp Victory May 24.



Capt. Gail Evans, 3rd Inf. Div., physician's assistant, pushes a young Iraqi girl on a swing at the playground outside the Civil Military Operations Center at Camp Victory.



Sgt Richard Skorik, a chaplain assistant with 3rd Inf. Div., unpacks donations at the Civil Military Operations Center.

*Come out and make a difference, volunteer or donate items for the clinic. For more information please contact Chaplain (Capt.) Ric Thompson at DSN 318-822-3166.*

## Local Iraqis trust, request combat medic

**Maj. Joe Sowers**

*3 HBCT 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs*

FORWARD OPERATING BASE HAMMER, Iraq — The citizens of Arafina know who to ask for when they have a medical problem, and that person is a 24-year-old from York, Ala.

Cpl. Rayhsun Crawford, a medic with 2nd platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, has administered aid to multiple Iraqis for various injuries in the small town and is now considered a “go-to” guy for any ailment by the local citizens.

Soldiers of Company D patrol the small town to assist the local Iraqi Security Forces in their efforts to improve security.

In line with the Army’s new emphasis on counter-insurgency doctrine, units in 1-15th Inf. are working out of small combat outpost and joint security stations in the communities that they are tasked to protect.

Leaders also emphasize interaction with the local populace, especially influential leaders.

While conducting a combat patrol on Monday, Company D Soldiers were informed that a local mukhtar, or mayor, had hurt his ankle earlier in the day and requested the attention of Crawford.

Crawford administered aid to the mukhtar and got him back on his feet.

“Corporal Crawford is now a local hero in the area,” said Capt. Simon McKenzie, a staff officer in 1-15th Inf., “The mukhtar was extremely pleased with the medical attention. Many locals that are injured in the AO (area of operations) request help from Corporal Crawford, because he does such a great job.”

The 1-15th Inf. is part of the 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Benning, Ga., and is currently deployed west of Baghdad in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Spc. Ben Hutto

**Col. Wayne W. Grigsby, Jr., the commander of the 3/3rd Inf. Div., brigade Command Sergeant Major James H. Pearson and Pfc. Relaine Hughs, the youngest medic in 203rd BSB, cut the ribbon on the doorway of FOB Hammer Sgt. Robertson Aid Station May 30.**

## 3rd HBCT opens aid station, honors fallen medic, ensuring Soldiers’ health priority

**Spc. Ben Hutto**

*3 HBCT 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs*

FORWARD OPERATING BASE HAMMER, Iraq — The 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division unveiled its combat aid station at Forward Operating Base Hammer May 30.

Col. Wayne W. Grigsby, Jr., the commander of the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, and Command Sgt. Maj. James H. Pearson, the Command Sergeant Major of the 3rd HBCT, and Pfc. Relaine Hughs, the youngest medic in the 203rd Brigade Support Battalion, from Chicago, cut the ribbon on the doorway of the FOB Hammer SGT Robertson Aid Station.

“The first thing we started setting up on this FOB was

this aid station because we wanted to make sure our Soldiers are taken care of,” said Grigsby, addressing the Soldiers present.

The new aid station will be used by 3rd HBCT medics to help treat injured and sick Soldiers.

“The main benefit that this building provides is that we are all now consolidated,” said Sgt. 1st Class Coree Dansler, the NCO in charge of the station, Company C, 203rd BSB, from Chauvin, La. “The weather here makes it difficult to maintain a sterile environment. This building will be much easier to keep clean. The heat out here is also a problem. The air conditioning in this building will help us more effectively treat casualties. The patients here will be our top priority.”



## 1-15 Inf. detains suspects, finds weapons near town

**Maj. Joe Sowers**

*3 HBCT 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs*

FORWARD OPERATING BASE HAMMER, Iraq — Three men were detained and a weapons were found by Company B, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Soldiers north of Salman Pak Sunday.

The weapons confiscated consisted of one rocket propelled grenade launcher, two RPG rounds, three RPG propellants, one bag of magazines and one bag of small arms ammunition.

The detained individuals were found transporting electrical wire, a common component of roadside bombs.

Company B was engaged by two roadside bombs during the mission to eliminate cache sites and interdict infiltration routes in the area. No one was injured during the incident.

Courtesy photo

**1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Soldiers display the contents of a cache they discovered north of Salman Pak Sunday.**

# Coalition commanders join to inform locals

By Staff Sgt. Sean Riley

3 HBCT 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE HAMMER, Iraq – Coalition Forces and Iraqi police patrolled together during a mission to spread the word about Coalition and Iraqi projects and their potential benefits to the citizens of Salman Pak, Sunday.

Lt. Col. Jack Marr, Minneapolis, commander of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, and Brig. Gen. Hassan, the commander of 1st Battalion, 1st Iraqi National Police Brigade, walked the streets of the city to inform the local populace of operations and gain support for the Iraqi police and their Coalition counterparts.

“One of the most important things of the mission was NP and U.S. forces patrolling the streets together,” said 2nd Lt. Michael Stratizar, a staff officer with 1-15th Inf. who was present during the mission. “It let the people see that we are working together and that they can trust us. I had heard that the people of Salman Pak were not that receptive, but I did not get that impression. We were received well by many of the people we interacted with.”

The pair spoke to local shopkeepers, school officials and citizens they met on the streets during the day-long venture. Afterwards, the commanders discussed future plans of cleaning the city through sanitation projects.

The 1-15th Infantry is assigned to the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, from Fort Benning, Ga



Courtesy photo

**Brig. Gen. Hassan, commander of the 1st Battalion, 1st Iraqi National Police Brigade, and Lt. Col. Jack Marr, commander of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, greet local citizens during a patrol on the streets of Salman Pak, May 27.**

## Financial rewards: Part IV

# How Uncle Sam can help you save

By Spc. Chris McCann

2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) Public Affairs

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq —The Army has several ways to help Soldiers save.

The Thrift Savings Plan is similar to a 401(k) – it is invested in a low-risk mutual fund – but a Soldier’s input is not matched by the government.

“You can provide money from your base pay, incentive pays, and bonuses,” said Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Harvey of Binghamton, N.Y., the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, N.Y. human resources and finance noncommissioned officer in charge.

A deployed Soldier who lives frugally could theoretically invest almost 100 percent of his pay for the duration of the tour – and continue to invest more and earn interest as long as he is employed by the federal government.

There is also the Savings Deposit Plan, which earns ten percent interest – “you’re not going to find that (interest rate) anywhere else,” said Harvey – and allows personnel to set aside up to 100 percent of their base pay only, and only up to \$10,000 each year. Unless a Soldier earns at least \$3,333 each month in base pay, they won’t earn the maximum amount of interest, but the earnings are still unrivaled, he added.

“I think the easiest thing is to head to the Finance Office and ask about the TSP,” said Spc. Mike Mihelich of St. Louis, Mo., a radio-telephone operator for Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team. “It’s somewhere around a thousand dollars in free money over the course of one year.”

For a Soldier or family member who wants to invest more aggressively, many major banks provide one-stop, Internet-available banking, investing and other financial aids, said Harvey.

“You can do everything you need online, plus you’re earning interest on your money. You can manage it all

from over here.”

Such institutions offer money-market accounts, mutual-fund individual retirement accounts, Roth IRAs, stocks, and mutual funds, and because they are banking institutions rather than brokers, they do not work on commissions.

Harvey advises that Soldiers diversify their investments, and said that there are many stocks – such as those that make up the Dow Jones Industrial Average – which have been around for a long time and will always increase in value, though their prices fluctuate.

It’s all a balance, Harvey said.

“You don’t want to put all your eggs in one basket,” he said. “And you also don’t want to cook your eggs too fast. ... You’re in control of your money. If you’re young, think long-term. You can’t be Donald Trump overnight, but it’s never too late to start.”

A Soldier who invests \$100 a month in a medium-risk mutual fund for 20 years could, by the age of 55, have a million dollars in the bank – and 20 years to live and spend that money.

Even in the short term, a \$10,000 investment at five percent interest earns \$550 in a year.

For what? Nothing. Patience said Harvey. “(Money) is out there to be made. You just have to be disciplined – that’s a cornerstone of the Army – and patient. There are a lot of ways to save money. You just have to find the ones that work for you.”

The money Harvey saved last deployment has grown, he said.

“I took that money, which I didn’t need – since I had been able to save it, I didn’t need it – and dropped it into investments, and doubled it.”

“You can’t save all the time, obviously,” he said. “You’d be miserable, and spend too much at once. When you get a big chunk, set some aside for blowing on things. But set aside savings, too.”

A good start for a Soldier might be the Savings De-



posit Plan, said Harvey.

“If you do it by allotment, you’re not tempted. The next thing you know, you’ve made money on interest.”

Mihelich concurred.

“When you don’t see it in the first place, there’s no temptation. You set an allotment, and just check on it once in awhile.”

“This is the best time for Soldiers to save,” he added. “We’re tax-exempt, there are no real expenses, and things like DVDs are inexpensive. We have so much food provided by the dining facility.... You just have to be conscious of what you’re spending.”

The Camp Striker Chapel offers Dave Ramsey’s “Financial Peace University” classes Monday evenings at 7 p.m. for Soldiers who want to improve their budgeting and saving skills as well.

“Be frugal,” Harvey said. “It’s your financial security, and it’s nice not to have to worry about money.”

**Financial rewards is a four-part series written by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI)**

## An Interview With Rocky: The Life and Legacy of the Bulldog

By Spc. William Hatton  
Task Force Marne Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq - Some might call him a loyal dog, and others might call him the very rock of the Marne. For most Soldiers in the 3rd Infantry Division, Rocky is the motivating force that uplifts every Marne Soldier in country, or so they say. From beachfront to sand dune, Rocky has been there supporting the dog-faced Soldier through thick and thin.

Now that the 3rd Inf. Div. has deployed to Iraq, I sat down and had a heart to heart with Rocky where we discussed his feelings of the current deployment and a little bit about his upbringing and his early days as a pup. What he shared was more than enjoyable ... it ... was ... life changing.

Without further adieu ...

**Hatton: So how did you find your way into being a mascot?**

Rocky: Well it's funny you ask, my mom always said I was destined to do something important with my life. However, when I dropped out of college and starting living in the basement, she didn't say that any more.

Then one day when I was trying to figure out my life, a man named Walt Disney gave me more than just inspiration: he gave me a home.

As Soldiers were heading off to Europe to fight the good fight in the '40s, they needed someone to look up to, someone to provide hope, and Walt said that someone was going to be me.

So with a good marketing and design team, headed by Disney himself, that's how I came to be the 3rd Infantry Division's mascot.

**H: No kidding, so were you and Walt tight?**

R: Oh yeah, we use to have block parties every week. He was originally going to produce the 'Rocky the Dog Show', but Mickey got the show instead. I'd

say it turned out for the best. Think about it, how motivating or inspiring would a mouse be as a division mascot?

**H: That is a good point. I don't think Mickey would have been as rough and tough as you. Since becoming the 3rd Infantry Division mascot, what have you experienced?**

R: Well let me tell you, it has been no joy ride. It's tough being the shining example everyone sees and smiles at when they walk into the division headquarters. A lot is expected of me.

It seems like every day someone is wanting to take a picture with me, whether it's Toby Keith or that commanding general that loves me so. I won't lie; I do like all the attention.

I guess over the years, I've grown to become the icon I am. It doesn't come over night.

I remember in early fall of 1950 when the division was heading off for Korea, I was really scared. I didn't know what to expect, it would be my first real opportunity to leave the country and be away from my home. I knew that there were Soldiers that needed my support, so I sucked it up and drove on. I had to be the alpha dog you know.

Over the years I have just become more of a rough and tough character, but tell me someone out there has a more uplifting smile than mine. People like that kinda stuff, especially from a bulldog. I just try to play the role.

**H: So now that you are here in Iraq, how do you think you and the division are going to hold up?**

R: That's an easy question, we are going to totally rock the Marne. That's what the kids are saying isn't it?

I just figure with such a great division as the 3rd Infantry Division is, we are going to get the job done, move forward, and build a better tomorrow for the people of Iraq.

Ok, so that sounded kind of like a robot, but it's true.

We have great Soldiers that do a great job.

I'm just glad I get to greet each one that comes to visit the headquarters. I

like to pretend sometimes that they are really just coming to visit me.

**H: Well I'd like to thank you for letting me interview you, I know you don't let many journalists close. Is there anything you would like to add?**

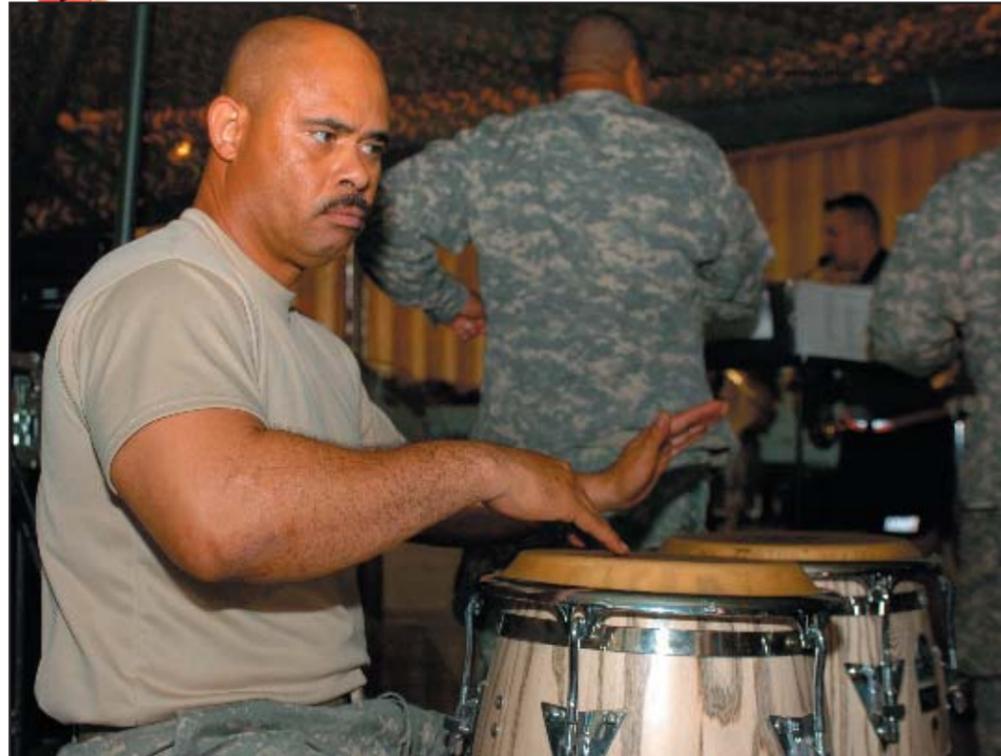
R: Well I think the 3rd Infantry Division song says it best, "Your dog face Soldier's A Okay!"



Photo Illustration by Spc. William Hatton



# “Latin



**ABOVE: As the band performs their different peices, Sgt. 1st Class Frank Ruiz, a bongo drummer from 1st Cavalry Division, gets into the music and starts pounding away while the band plays. BELOW: Saxophonist, Sgt. Barney Rowe, with the 3rd Infantry Division Band, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Inf. Div., plays a catchy tune during a rehearsal with the salsa group 'Latin Fire.'**



**Fire**™**heating up life in Iraq**

**Staff Sgt. Julio De La Rosa, a drummer with the salsa band 'Latin Fire', from 3rd Infantry Division Band, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Inf. Div., pounds away on the drums during a rehearsal. De La Rosa, a native of Humaco, Puerto Rico, is the non-commissioned officer in charge of the group of musicians with different music backgrounds and helps them perform what becomes exciting and entertaining salsa music.**

**Story and photos by Spc. William Hatton**  
Task Force Marne Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq - Life on a forward operating base or camp in Iraq can often be considered blazing. Whether it's the intolerable summers or occasional intense gunfights, undoubtedly temperatures are on the rise.

For Soldiers across Iraq, life is becoming a little spicier as the salsa band Latin Fire, with the 3rd Infantry Division Band, performs for Soldiers and heats things up on stage.

Latin Fire is made up of different Soldiers, with different styles and backgrounds, that come together and simply get into the music, said Staff Sgt. Julio De La Rosa, drummer and noncommissioned officer in charge of the group, with 3rd Inf Div. Band, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Inf. Div.

One of the most enjoyable parts of playing salsa music is simply playing music that it comes from the heart, said De La Rosa, a native of Humaco, Puerto Rico.

"A lot of people will learn a job and have no passion for what they do. I joined the Army because I wanted to play music, and that is what they've trained me to do," De La Rosa said. "It's the only thing that keeps me sane over here."

One thing that makes the group different from a typical salsa band is that a few of the members have no background in salsa music, said Staff Sgt. Dana Fischl, a vocalist with the band, with 3rd Inf. Div. Band, DSTB, 3rd Inf. Div.

For Fischl, an interesting part about being a vocalist with a Spanish salsa group is the fact that she doesn't know any Spanish, said Fischl, a native of Seymour, Wisc.

It takes a lot of memorization and learning different phonetics to sing different Spanish songs, she added.

As the group comes together and members learn each others' style, the music is strengthened, said Sgt. Richard Yaeger, a trombone player with the group.

"It's good to play with these guys," said Yaeger, a native of Farmington, Minn. "When we play, we all just feed off of each others' energy. When the person next to you is getting into it, it just spreads."

Another way that the energy is raised is when the audience gets into the music, Fischl said.

"I just love going from FOB to FOB and playing for Soldiers," Fischl said. "Just

seeing the look on their faces, and seeing people get into the music is what really does it for me."

As the band gets into the groove, so do the people, Yaeger said. "It's nice just to see people up and dancing around as we play."

With the band continuing to heat things up on stage, the dance floors will be full, the moods will be joyous, and Soldiers will find themselves getting a break from the daily grind. So keep a look out for the next time Latin Fire comes and performs near you.

To schedule the 3rd Inf. Div. Band for a unit function, call DSN 82-7752 or 243-6462.



**Vocalist, Spc. Edgado Otero sings with passion during a rehearsal for upcoming shows with the salsa group 'Latin Fire.'**

# Asian, Pacific, Islanders celebrate heritage with residents at Camp Victory

Story by Staff Sgt. Samantha M. Stryker  
Task Force Marne Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq — As the desert sun began its descent in the evening sky, the scene was set by the welcoming sights and sounds of the Pacific.

Hafa Adai, the Chamorro greeting for hello, welcomed guests to the Asian Pacific Islanders Heritage celebration at the 3rd Infantry Division's headquarters on Camp Victory, Thursday.

After brief remarks by guest speakers, Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, 3rd Inf. Div. commander and Brig. Gen. Jim Huggins, deputy commanding general for Maneuver, 3rd Inf. Div., the crowd was treated to truly unique performances by traditional dance groups and singers.

The Pasefika Aulelei, a dance group made up of performers, military and civilians stationed in Germany and some whom are deployed here in Iraq, performed traditional dances for members of guests.

Dancer and Laotian, Spc. Thanakone Sayavong said the two performances by his male

trio, a warrior dance and a Tahitian dance, were chosen because the chants were fun and were good symbols of the islands.

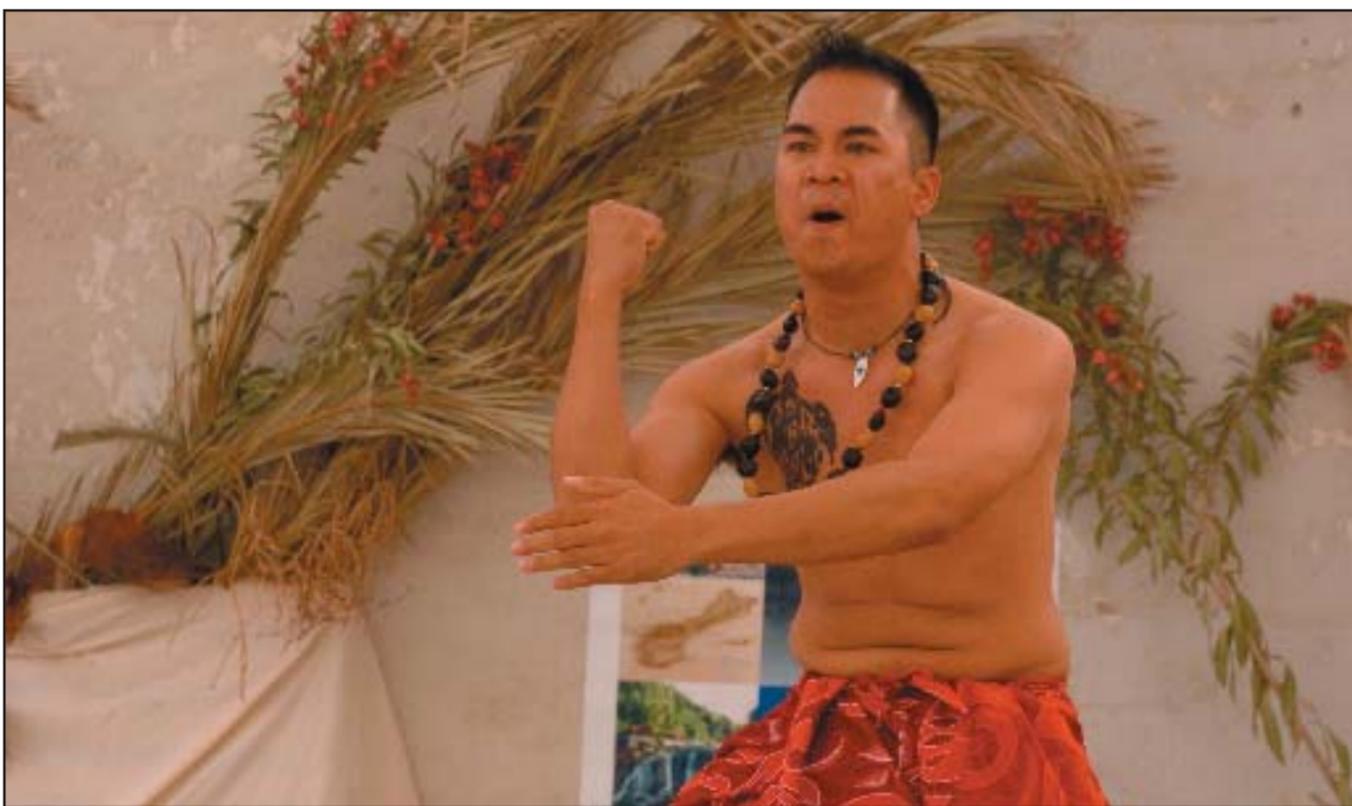
"The dances are a celebration of the islands," he said. "Our goal is

to highlight and spread the love and spirit of the Polynesian and Pacific islands."

The dancers said they get as much out of their performance as the crowd.

"These events are fun and give people a diversion from being here," said Alisha Rowland, a Polynesian dancer with the group. "It also helps us embrace our culture even more and share our roots."

One of the division's own, Peter Guerrero, performed



Photos by Staff Sgt. Samantha M. Stryker

**TOP:** Spc. Thanakone Sayavong entertains the crowd with a warrior dance and chant during the Asian Pacific Islanders Heritage celebration at Camp Victory, 24 May. **LEFT:** Mesmerizing the crowd, Tech. Sgt. Alisha Rowland dances for the crowd during Asian Pacific Heritage celebrations at Camp Victory, Thursday. **BOTTOM:** Three members of the Fiji dance group perform a traditional dance and sing celebratory songs during heritage festivities.

two rap songs praising Chamorros of the past and present.

"I used the new way, rap, to spread the word about Guam," said Guerrero, "and get the younger generation involved and learn about their history."

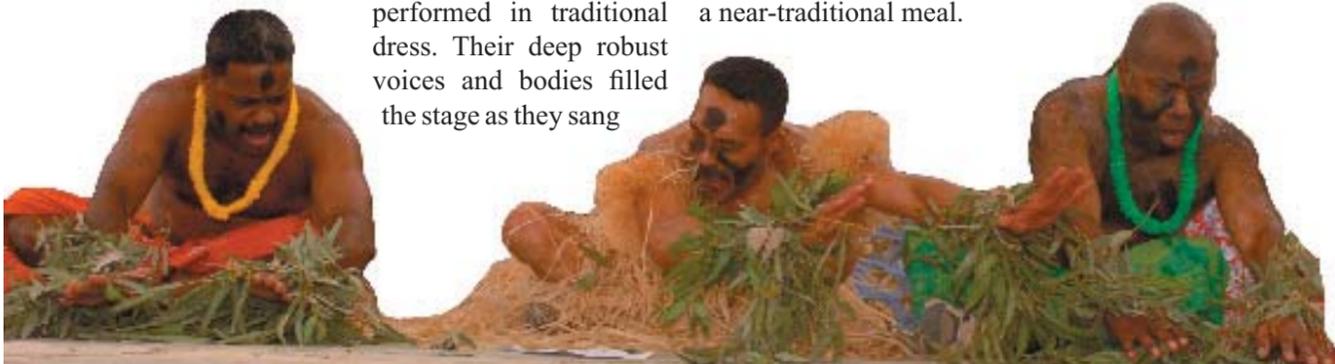
As the grand finale, on-lookers were treated to a song and dance review

by an all male Fijian group who performed in traditional dress. Their deep robust voices and bodies filled the stage as they sang

of their proud heritage and history. Entranced, the audience could not applaud loud enough and was reciprocated with song and chants of the island's military heraldry.

Immediately after the show, performers were thanked by Huggins with gifts and certificates.

After the event, everyone enjoyed a near-traditional meal.





## Caribbean Heritage Observance

Multi National Division – Center will celebrate Caribbean Heritage Month June 21. Caribbean Heritage Month is observed 1-30 June annually by a Presidential Proclamation signed in 2006, to celebrate the contributions of millions of Caribbean-Americans to the United States.

The Island Vibes committee is seeking singers, dancers, and poets to participate in the program. All Islanders, come out and represent your country.

If you are interested in participating in this program, please contact Sgt. 1st Class Toussaint, MND-C Equal Opportunity Program Manager, NVOIP: 822-7653, SVOIP: 243-4128, email: [tanya.toussaint@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:tanya.toussaint@iraq.centcom.mil).

Rehearsals will be held on Tuesdays and Fridays, at 7 p.m. at the Task Force Marne motor pool.

Like the stories you've seen in the Marne Focus?  
Check out the video for these stories in...



# The Marne Forward

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