

The Daily Roar

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MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION - BAGHDAD

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MiTT finds new home

4th IBCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div.

BAGHDAD – The 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery internal Military Transition Team (MiTT), Team Lightning, has found a new temporary home in the Karada Peninsula of south central Baghdad.

Team Lightning's Baghdad compound, Combat Outpost (COP) LB, is adjacent to 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division headquarters, a building that used to serve as a professional library for ranking officers in the old Iraqi Army, said Sanborn, Iowa native Capt. Sean O'Brien, Headquarters Support Company, 5th Bn. 25th FA MiTT. Team Lightning's amenities at COP LB include an indoor fountain, a spiral staircase, a backdrop of the Tigris River and recently provided hot water and shower heads, O'Brien boasted.

O'Brien credits cooks from 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor for consistently doing a great job providing hot meals. Soldiers of 2nd Bn. 69th Armor Regt. and Team Lightning share space and responsibility of mentoring their Iraqi Army counterparts into a viable, professional force, he said.

"Team Lightning is a dynamic group of professionals who all contribute with significant experiences and abilities," said O'Brien. "Each Soldier is expected to shoulder far more than

his personal burdens, as the team is so small."

The formation of Team Lightning was developed before deployment from Fort Polk, La., based on analysis of individual's skill sets, O'Brien explained. Upon arriving in Iraq, Team Lightning Soldiers completed advanced training at the U.S. Army's Phoenix Academy on Camp Taji, north of Baghdad. While there, 5th Bn., 25th FA MiTT Soldiers received further instruction regarding Arabic language and culture and advanced counterinsurgency techniques and training in advising foreign forces. O'Brien went on to say Team Lightning received briefings from top U.S. Army, Coalition and Iraqi Leaders.

After completing training at Camp Taji, Team Lightning Soldiers conducted seven-to-ten days of intensive training with the outgoing MiTT. During this time, Team Lightning Soldiers were introduced to their Iraqi Army counterparts, conducted reconnaissance of their area of responsibility and met their U.S. partner unit, O'Brien stated. They also conducted advanced training on the weapons and equipment they will use for the remainder of their deployment.

Team Lightning MiTT Soldiers are excited to be a part of what will be a critical transition to a free and stable Iraq, said O'Brien.



Congressmen visit troops

Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN)(standing) and Rep. Lincoln Davis (D-TN)(sitting), address Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Jan. 15 at the Strike Brigade Headquarters on Camp Liberty, Iraq.

By Sgt. James P. Hunter 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. PAO



By Spc. Charles W. Gill 55th Combat Camera

Relax

BAGHDAD-- Iraqi Army soldiers from 1st Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, relax with a game of pool in the break area of their Battalion Headquarters in the Mansour District of Baghdad, Iraq, Jan. 9.



The Player of the Day Award is presented to Capt. James Donaghue for outstanding performance as the Red Team intel officer. Capt. Donaghue volunteered to mobilize from the Texas Army National Guard to attend Red Team Leader's course and serve as the intel officer on the Army's first Divisional Red Team. His dedication to duty and selfless service make him today's Player of the Day.

Baghdad Three Day Weather Forecast

Friday
Partly cloudy
HI: 55F/13C
LO: 33F/1C



Saturday
Clear
HI: 57F/14C
LO: 33F/1C



Sunday
Partly cloudy
HI: 57F/14C
LO: 39F/4C




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Task Force XII Airmen look to the skies

By Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton
Task Force XII PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – In the midst of all the black and white maps and radar images that litter the office, hangs a photo of a beautiful beach setting with crystal blue waters and palm trees gently swaying in the breeze. This depiction of perfect weather seems oddly out of place for a weather office in a country where the weather is anything but perfect.

The members of the Task Force XII staff weather office are used to feeling a little out of place. The eight non-flight Airmen, working amongst a few thousand Soldier-aviators who patrol the skies of Baghdad every day, are proud of their unique role.

“Providing support for the Army, or going to work on an Army base, there are a lot of misconceptions about what we know about the Army, or what they know about us,” said Texarkana, Ark. native, Tech. Sgt. David Ivey, a battlefield weather forecaster. “It’s a good experience, and when it comes down to it, we’re all pretty much the same.”

Ivey has been working with the Army for two of his six years as a weather forecaster. He says that despite the obvious uniform differences, he and his fellow Airmen live and work amongst the Army just like any Soldier in the brigade.

There is one minor difference. While the Soldiers of the brigade will serve 15 months in Iraq, the Airmen are here and back in five months, in accordance with Air Force policy.

“Our co-workers (in the Army) tease us about the shorter tours, but teasing is pretty much all it is,” said Ivey.

“The Soldiers in this brigade are great people. They’re aviators, so they’re about as close to the Air Force as you can get,” said Capt. Shawn Beskar, staff weather officer. “We get good support from them, and I think we provide good support in return.”

The mission for the Airmen of Task Force XII is a key element to flight operations, he said.

“We take weather observations, looking out for hazardous weather, so if a warning needs to be issued, we’ll take care of that,” said Beskar, who hails from Egan, Minn. “We also provide mission services, which are the flight weather briefings for the crews. We deliver updated weather forecasts in person to the pilots, and answer the radio when pilots contact us for updates, and we provide the weather briefs for the leadership to help them plan missions.”

In addition to the immediate support they provide for the brigade, they also send their weather data through an automated network to the Air Force Weather Agency in Omaha, Neb., allowing access to their work from computer networks around the world.

Much of their weather collection is done through internet weather hubs that produce analysis of weather, and with their own sophisticated equipment that takes automated measurements. One of their most reliable pieces of equipment, though, is the ladder outside their window.

“At least once an hour, one of our observers goes up to the roof of the building and takes the weather observations,” said Beskar. “We’re looking for known markers at certain distances to see how far we can see. We’re looking at the sky’s condition, the kinds of clouds and the altitude of those clouds.”

“When (bad) weather’s coming it gets a lot more stressful. A lot of people are asking a lot of questions and you want to give them the right answer,” he said. “You want to make sure that your

warnings are correct because a bad report can have a pretty negative impact on operations.”

When they leave their current assignments, the Airmen assigned to Task Force XII may return to Air Force bases, concentrating on weather that affects an F-16 Fighting Falcon or C-130 Hercules instead of a UH-60 Black Hawk or AH-64 Apache.

“Weather is weather, of course,” said Beskar. “Most of the Air Force assets are flying a lot higher, and maybe a lot faster, so the things they’re going to be affected by are going to be different.

“Helicopters are flying lower. They’re in the weather,” he said. “So we have to be especially attentive to the details.”

Although on this wet, cold January day, Taji is nowhere near as perfect as the photo in their office, the Airmen of the Task Force XII weather office assure the Army there’s good weather on the horizon ... and if anything changes, they’ll be the first to know.



by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton, Task Force XII PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Texarkana, Ark. native, Tech. Sgt. David Ivey records weather data from the roof of the Task Force XII tactical operations center Dec. 10.