



# The Mountain View

www.taskforcemountain.com

March 2, 2009

## Comanche Soldiers turn JSS 2 into ‘crown gem’

SPC. JOSH LeCAPPELAIN  
2ND BCT, 4TH INF. DIV.



CAMP ECHO – Deep in the heart of the Diwaniya Province, a bustling building stands behind huge walls. From within, the consistent hum of engines and electrical equipment signals the arrivals and departures of vehicles, constantly slipping through the entrance onto the busy streets outside.

The vehicles are all shapes and sizes, and are driven primarily by three groups of individuals – U.S. Soldiers assigned to Comanche Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army Soldiers. Together, the three groups share Joint Security Station 2.

Following their arrival in September, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, quickly sent Comanche Company to take control of JSS 2. Upon arrival, the Soldiers were shocked by what they found.

“This place needed a lot of help to be up to U.S. and Iraqi standards,” said Staff Sgt. Josiah Cecil, Comanche Company headquarters platoon sergeant and intelligence noncommissioned officer-in-charge. “There were feral cats running around and garbage lying everywhere.”

According to 1st Sgt. Dwayne Uhlig of Comanche Company, his Soldiers took out 30 truckloads of trash and debris when they arrived.

A quick survey of the roof found that it too needed immediate improvements to protect and ensure the safety of everyone inside.

Working quickly, Uhlig and his Soldiers drew up a plan for weapon and bunker braces, and began bunker forti-



Photo by Spc. Josh LeCappelain

Staff Sgt. Nicholas Garcia, Comanche Company section sergeant, conducts pre-combat inspections on Soldiers before a patrol Feb. 23. Garcia is a native of Abilene, Texas.

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# STB conducts hair-raising NCODP, fund-raiser



Photos by Sgt. Rodney Foliente  
 (Left) Command Sgt. Major Wade Myers, STB, 2nd BCT, 4th Inf. Div., is used in a tug-of-war match by Staff Sgt. Ruby (left) and Staff Sgt. Buddy (right) while K9 handler, Sgt. Troy Stiner, watches during a military working dog demonstration for NCODP at Camp Echo Feb. 21. Myers volunteered as a fundraiser for the STB Ball, to be held upon the unit's return to Colorado Springs, Colo. (Inset) Myers unsuccessfully flees from Staff Sgt. Ruby, followed by her handler, Stiner. (Below) Marine Staff Sgt. Chris Willingham, MWD kennel master, demonstrates Staff Sgt. Buddy's aggressiveness when threatened, as Army Sgt. Tyler Barriere, Buddy's handler, holds him back during a demonstration for NCODP.



## THE Mountain View

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 Task Force 449



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# GEM

## From page 1

fictions – filling approximately 17,000 sandbags, weighing close to 200 metric tons, within two months of arrival.

The improved roof security has earned it the title of “the crown gem,” according to Uhlig. Visitors galore have come to JSS 2 to view its design and execution, including Maj. Gen. Michael Oates, Multi-National Division – Center commander and his senior-enlisted advisor, Command Sgt. Maj. James Redmore.

Uhlig, a native of Wickenburg, Az., is quick to give credit where credit is due.

“I’m really proud of what my Soldiers have done in a short amount of time,” said the first sergeant. “I gave them basic guidance and they ran with it, doing it right the first time. We take great pride in what they’ve done here.”

It is hard enough moving into a new home that needs tons of work when you are more than 7,000 miles away from loved ones. Add into that factor the dynamic of having new roommates that don’t speak the same language and it intensifies.

“It was hard at first to get used to being around and living with Iraqis,” said Cecil, a native of Galesburg, Ill. “After a few weeks, you get used to it – and

develop a closer relationship. You get to know them.”

Spc. Andrew Minter, a Comanche Company tank gunner, agreed that it was difficult at first, joking that it took “a while to get used to living with people with AK-47s.”

“There’s a language barrier,” noted Minter, a native of Spurgeon, Texas, “but they are good people. Sometimes they even go into town and bring us back (Iraqi) food.”

Dealing with communication difficulties wasn’t the only thing the Comanche Soldiers had to adapt to.

“It’s hard to go without amenities. The changes from Kuwait to Camp Echo, then to JSS 2, were large,” added Cecil. “But, I don’t think any one of us would want to be anywhere else now.”

While JSS 2 doesn’t have the extras that somewhere like Camp Victory does, it isn’t Spartan. Soldiers have hot food twice a day, as well as a Morale, Welfare and Recreation room equipped with televisions and video game systems, computers with internet capabilities, phones to call home and a variety of weightlifting and cardiovascular exercise machines.

As nice as all those amenities are, life would be difficult without good leadership.

“We have a very good chain-of-

command,” said Pvt. Anthony Rogers, Comanche Company training room noncommissioned officer-in-charge. “The NCO leadership has things very squared away here.”

While improvements at the JSS and great leadership have made the adjustment easier, the improved environment in Iraq plays a large part in making life easier, as well.

“The situation has changed for the better,” said Cecil, who previously deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005. “The Iraqi Security Forces have improved a lot – they are more professional than before. I’ve never seen a more secure city in Iraq than Diwaniya.”

Minter agreed with Cecil’s assessment of Diwaniya, calling it “quiet” and saying he isn’t a huge fan of being “shot at.”

“I can actually say that we have a definite mission,” added Cecil. “We have actually accomplished something in this country.”



(Barkground) Diwaniya can be viewed from the top of JSS 2. (Inset) Iraqi Soldiers depart JSS 2, as 1st Sgt. Dwayne Uhlig, Comanche Company, watches them go Feb. 22.

# ISF drop into history

SPC. JOSH LeCAPPELAIN  
2ND BCT, 4TH INF. DIV.



CAMP ECHO – Members of the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Air Force made history Feb. 19 high above the Diwaniya Province.

Soldiers in the 8th IA Division distributed 150,000 leaflets to the town of Abu Sukhayr, out of the back of two Mi-17 helicopters – the first airdrop done in the Diwaniya Province conducted solely by members of the Iraqi Security Forces.

“This was their leaflet and their aircraft, to help support their people,” said Lt. Col. Adrian Bogart III, deputy commanding officer, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. “This was the first time that we have seen the Iraqi Air Force drop leaflets in this area.”

The leaflets warned Iraqi citizens about the dangers and risks associated with explosively formed penetrators.

“EFPs are not only dangerous to military forces, but civilians as well,” said Bogart.

“The people involved in making EFPs are also involved in other acts of terror. They are a violent criminal element which the people of Diwaniya can assist in bringing to justice.”

Coalition forces contributed minor support to the IA and IAF, going over the drop procedure and safety precautions with them as well as helping print the IA-designed leaflet. The delivery of the leaflets was conducted by members of the IAF and four IA Soldiers, two of whom were taking their first ride in a helicopter.

“We are very proud of our partner’s ability to take the next step forward,” added Bogart. “They are bringing a high level of security to this area.”

The IA Soldiers who successfully completed the leaflet drop are already planning for an additional drop in the near future.



Iraqi Army courtesy photo

Hundreds of leaflets fly through the air as an IA Soldier tosses them to Iraqi citizens in Abu Sukhayr Feb. 19.

# The Meaning of Life



Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Mullett

# Headline Round-up

## World News:

**TORONTO** - Fighter jets were scrambled to intercept a Russian bomber in the Arctic as it approached Canadian airspace on the eve of President Barack Obama's visit to Ottawa last week, Canada's defense minister said Feb. 27. Peter MacKay said the bomber never entered Canadian airspace. But he said two Canadian CF-18 jets met the bomber in international airspace and sent a "strong signal that they should back off." "They met a Russian aircraft that was approaching Canadian airspace, and as they have done in previous occasions they sent very clear signals that are understood, that the aircraft was to turnaround, turn tail, and head back to their airspace, which it did," MacKay said. "I'm not going to stand here and accuse the Russians of having deliberately done this during the presidential visit, but it was a strong coincidence," he said of the Feb. 18 incident.

## U.S. News:

Supporters of programs to provide legal marijuana to patients with painful medical conditions are celebrating Attorney General Eric Holder's statement this week that the Drug Enforcement Administration would end its raids on state-approved marijuana dispensaries. Federal raids on medical marijuana distributors continued at least into the second week of Barack Obama's presidency, when federal agents shut down at least two dispensaries in California on Feb. 3. Holder was asked about those raids Wednesday in Santa Ana, Calif., at a news conference that was called to announce the arrests of 755 people in a nationwide crackdown on the U.S. operations of Mexican drug cartels. He said such operations would no longer be conducted.

## Odd News:

**DENVER** - The Colorado State Patrol has withdrawn the \$22 jaywalking ticket issued to a good Samaritan who was seriously injured by a pickup after he pushed three people out of its path. Bus driver Jim Moffett of Denver and another man were helping two elderly women cross a busy Denver street in a snowstorm when he was hit Feb. 20. Moffett, 58, suffered bleeding in the brain, broken bones, a dislocated shoulder and a possible ruptured spleen. He remained hospitalized in serious condition Feb. 27.

## Quote of the Day

*"Politics, it seems to me, for years, or all too long, has been concerned with right or left instead of right or wrong."  
-Richard Armour*

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For the answer to today's puzzle, go to:



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## AROUND THE COMMUNITY

### Lions Den

Fridays  
"Gospel Hour: Moments of Joy"  
@ noon

### Fishbowl Gym

March 27  
Relay for Life HOPE Ceremony  
@ 8 p.m.

March 28  
Cancer awareness 5K/10K walk run. Free t-shirt and continental breakfast. Race begins @ 7 a.m.

April 11  
Pirate's Cove Run 5K/10K.  
Registration begins @ 7 a.m.,  
race begins @ w8 a.m.  
T-shirts awarded to top finishers.

### Slayer

March 7  
Camp Slayer Fishing Tournament, Operation Catch Fish, at Slayer Lake @ noon. For details visit <https://corps.intranet.iraq.centcom.mil/Pages/Default.aspx>.

### Victory

Thursdays  
Texas Hold 'Em at Area 51 @ 8 p.m.

### Babylon Theater

March 2  
Newcomers Brief @ 1 p.m.  
March 6  
Town Hall Meeting @ 1 p.m.  
March 17  
Fire Warden Class @ 1 p.m.  
Fire Extinguisher Class @ 2 p.m.  
March 16  
Newcomers Brief @ 1 p.m.  
March 20  
Town Hall Meeting @ 1 p.m.

### Freedom Chapel

Mondays  
A History of Christianity @ 7 p.m.  
Wednesdays  
Guitar lessons @ 7 p.m.  
Fridays  
Catholic Hour @ 6:30 p.m.