

# *in the* **ZONE**



## —Table of Contents—

- 3 From the Top**
- 4 Sovereignty Day**  
Iraq celebrates U.S. combat forces withdrawing from the nation's cities
- 6 I pledge Allegiance**  
After years of waiting, a service member celebrates Independence Day as a new U.S. citizen
- 7 Red Arrow Run**  
JASG sponsors 5k run
- 8 Focus on diplomacy**  
Australian soldiers protect their diplomats
- 10 Digital story time**  
United Through Reading helps deployed soldiers stay in touch with children via DVD
- 11 Hizzoner**  
Wisconsin Guard officer is mayor of FOB Prosperity
- 13 Operation Give**  
Service members load donated supplies onto trucks
- 14 Gone fishin'**  
Soldiers cast lines as a form of therapy
- 16 Chaplain's word**  
Groundhog Day
- 17 JAG brief**  
General Order #1
- 18 Outside the zone: Samarra**
- 19 New champs on the court**  
Fiji team wins volleyball tournament
- 21 Controlling IZ access**  
Prosperity's badging cell processes applications

**22 Parade of CHUs**

**23 Star watch:**  
Angelina Jolie visits the IZ

**24 Know where to go:**  
Life on the FOBs

**25 End zone**  
The last page



**Mathias Seitner, a biometrics system operator, fingerprints a badge applicant as part of the applicant security screening process at the FOB Prosperity badging cell July 20.**  
*Photo by Capt. Joy LeMay*

### On the Cover:

**Iraqi military ground forces pass for review during a parade held June 30 to celebrate U.S. combat forces withdrawing from Iraq's cities. Iraqi security forces were reviewed by Prime Minister Maliki, Minister of Defense Al Qadir, and Minister of Interior Bolani.**

*U.S. Air Force photo by Capt. Tommy Avilucea*

*in the*  
**ZONE**



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# From the Top

## JASG-C Commander

June 30th marked an important milestone for Iraq as the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) assumed responsibility for security of cities across Iraq. This day spurred pride and patriotism for the Iraqi people and the Government of Iraq (GOI). It also bestowed upon them a great responsibility to maintain the security and freedom of their country.

Our leadership and the GOI have expressed great confidence in the ability of ISF to maintain security and enforce the rule of law. Our job in the International Zone (IZ) is to continue to partner with our Iraqi counterparts to enable their success. Within the JASG-C, each directorate has a key role in accomplishment of this effort.

The environment here, although less volatile, is a bit ambiguous and uncertain—and definitely complex. Our soldiers are sometimes confused by subtle changes in

operating rules and standards and challenged to understand how it all fits together. This is increasingly frustrating at the leadership level, as well. We must always remember that being in charge and having the responsibility for security is a huge task. Our Iraqi partners are accepting that responsibility and are taking it very seriously. But as with any new commander, there are new rules and new procedures to follow. Until those new rules and procedures are understood and become normal practices, this frustration will continue.

There are a few things that we can do to help the situation. Reach out to our Iraqi counterparts in the spirit of cooperation and partnership. Treat them with respect and dignity. Be patient and allow them to do their job. Be compliant with their reasonable requests. Think of situations from their point of view and work within the



Col. Steven Bensend  
Commander  
Joint Area Support Group—Central

parameters they set.

I am not asking you to relax personal or operational security posture. Instead I am asking you to think about how we can be better partners with the Iraqis.

Thank you for all of your vital contributions to our efforts here. Working together, we will all make a difference for the people of Iraq.

## JASG-C Command Sergeant Major

Time is moving fast, too fast! It seems I just met the dead-line for my last piece for “In the Zone” and here it is show time again. But that’s exactly the same for most of us across the IZ. It reflects the nature of our mission, the fast-paced transition of the IZ back to the Iraqis. And with that fast pace has come change; gone is the “Green Zone” of the far past and now, we truly live in an International Zone. The Iraqi government is stepping forward and taking charge. This is what we trained them for; this is what we want from them, that they retake control of their country and their destiny. So, this is a RIP/TOA of a different sort, one between us and our Iraqi partners. This is good!

I’ve seen a number of Iraqi security initiatives in the IZ that have annoyed some and concerned others, but the initiatives look awful familiar, kind of the way we did things. Again change and too much change too fast makes us nervous,

it affects our battle rhythm, but its time has come.

As I said last month, “It’s time to finish what others have started and bring this piece of the war to an end,” so here are a few lessons I’ve learned over 30 years of service that may help. First, be patient, no matter how fast things seem to be moving change takes time, both physically and mentally. Second, there are many ways of doing things that get the same results. It could be our way or their way. Both are just ways of doing it. Last, sooner or later you have to trust, but a good Infantryman keeps his back to the wall and covers his six. Trust is one thing, stupidity another!

It’s time to return the IZ to the Iraqis, so be patient; they have their way just as we had ours. Now it’s up to them. Never lose your situational awareness, keep a good 360, if it doesn’t look right or sound or smell right, it’s not! As you move around the IZ in the months ahead, remember what may have been green in



Command Sgt. Maj. Edgar J. Hansen  
Command Sergeant Major  
Joint Area Support Group—Central

the past has become pink at best.

Never forget, these are momentous times to serve in a place with thousands of years of history. This is a mission like no other; give it 110 percent of your best effort. No matter how many tours you’ve served, this will be an experience you’ll never forget!

To all of our partners across the IZ, stay safe!

One team, one fight!

# Sovereignty Day



Iraq celebrates U.S. combat forces withdrawing from the nation's cities

U.S. Air Force photos by Capt. Tommy Avilucea

Near a parade field in Baghdad where Saddam Hussein once reviewed troops from the Republican Guard and other elite units, the government of Iraq celebrated National Sovereignty Day June 30 to mark the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from the nation's cities.

The day was also celebrated in other cities throughout Iraq, as the U.S. complied with Article 24 of the security agreement between the United States and the Republic of Iraq that took effect Jan. 1 with the troops-from-cities provision effective by the end of June.

"It is time for them to take responsibility inside the cities," Multi-National Force-Iraq commander, Gen. Raymond Odierno, told Fox News Sunday



Top: Iraqi security forces pay tribute at the Monument of the Unknown Soldier during the celebration of Iraq's national sovereignty day.

Bottom: Iraqi security forces passed for review representing the leadership of the military ground forces, naval and air operations June 30.

in a June 28 interview. “It’s time for this partnership to have an Iraqi lead, it’s time for this partnership to have the Iraqis out in front.”

While giving Iraqi security forces much of the credit, Odierno

told U.S. troops that Iraq didn’t prepare for this responsibility alone.

“Your efforts have made powerful strides toward achieving a sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq,” Odierno wrote in an open letter to MNF-I. “Today, Iraqis have hope for the future.”

Even before the June 30 deadline for U.S. combat forces to move out of Iraqi cities, many

units had already withdrawn.

“We’ve been slowly doing it over the last eight months,” Odierno said in the June 28 Fox News interview, “and the final units have moved out of the cities over the last several weeks.”

Odierno warns this accomplishment by no means suggests that the work of U.S. forces here is finished.

“We face complex challenges as we assist the Iraqis in protecting their population and providing security, he said.”

The movement of U.S. combat forces out of Iraq’s cities by June 30 meant that Iraq was now in

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“Today, Iraqis have hope for the future.”

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-Gen. Raymond Odierno  
Multi-National Force—Iraq commander



Iraqi military ground forces pass for review at a parade held June 30 celebrating U.S. combat forces withdrawing from Iraqi cities.

charge of its own security.

And it meant one more thing: the United States of America keeps her promises. ■



Iraqi security forces march across a parade field in Baghdad June 30 where they were reviewed by Prime Minister Maliki, Minister of Defense Al Qadir, and Minister of Interior Bolani.

# I pledge Allegiance

## After years of waiting, a service member celebrates Independence Day as a new U.S. citizen

By Spc. Michelle Gonzalez

Since the adoption of the Declaration of Independence 233 years ago, Americans have celebrated their freedom in different ways. Family gatherings, barbecues, parades, concerts and fireworks are common

examples of Independence Day celebrations in our nation.

However, one soldier celebrated the 4th of July in an unusual way.

Spc. Jesus Moran Alvarez became a citizen after reciting the Oath of Allegiance at the Multi-National Force—Iraq Naturalization ceremony held at Al Faw Palace at Victory Base Complex.

“I’ve always been proud to say I’m an American but now

it’s on paper,” Moran Alvarez said. “It’s a great feeling of accomplishment.”

I couldn’t believe I was at the ceremony, said the 30-year-old gunner and mechanic for Golf Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery. “I was excited and I had butterflies.”

“I can make a difference, get a federal job. The possibilities are endless.”

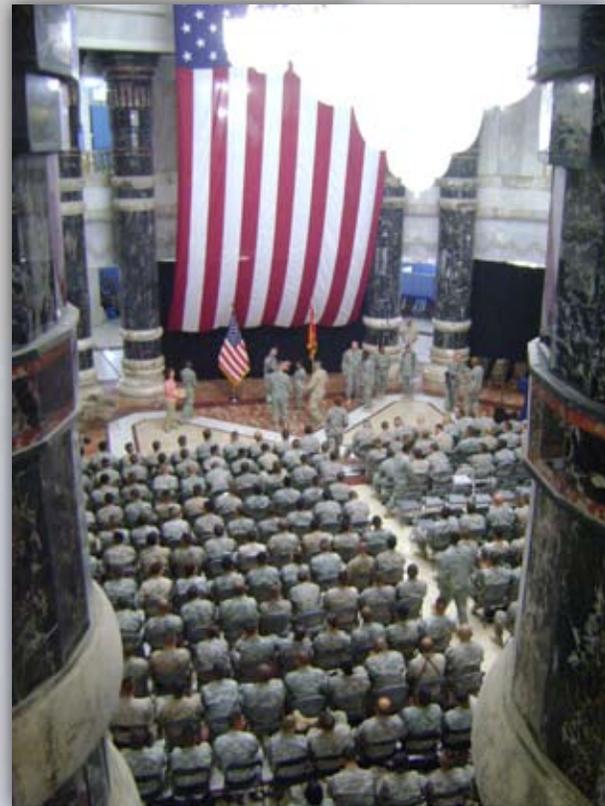
-Spc. Jesus Moran Alvarez,  
Golf Co., 1/7 th FA

Joe Biden, commended the candidates on becoming citizens.

“You now are all Americans,” said Odierno. “You represent the very best of all that our nation stands for: Freedom, opportunity, equality and service.”

“I can’t think of a more stirring example of patriotism than men and women volunteering to fight for their country on foreign soil before they were

Moran Alvarez—along with more than 230 other service members—listened as guest speakers, MNF-I commander Gen. Raymond Odierno and Vice President



Vice President Joe Biden and Multi-National Force—Iraq Commander Gen. Raymond Odierno greet each troop as they complete the naturalization process in becoming U.S. citizens. The MNF-I Naturalization Ceremony recognized 237 troops July 4 at Al Faw Palace, Victory Base Complex.

Photo by Master Sgt. Daniel Sullivan, 132nd Brigade Support Battalion

citizens,” said Biden.

Becoming a U.S. citizen took nearly four years for Moran Alvarez. His paperwork got lost four or five times. “After years of trying, my 1st Sgt. made a few calls and told me I was being naturalized July 4,” said Moran Alvarez. Although the process did take a long time, in the end it’s well worth it, he said. I’m no longer just fighting for no reason. Now I’m fighting for my country, he added.

“I can vote and choose my boss now,” Moran Alvarez declared. “I can make a difference, get a federal job. The possibilities are endless.” ■



# Red Arrow Run

## JASG sponsors 5k run

By Capt. Joy LeMay

Despite early morning temperatures in the 90's and dust-filled air, 90 runners from across the International Zone turned out for the Red Arrow Independence Day 5K run July 4 at Forward Operating Base Prosperity.

"We've had upwards of nearly 200 participants before, so I can't really say it was a record," said Craig Miller, the morale welfare and recreation supervisor. "But, it was an excellent turnout considering the weather and the fact we weren't giving away T-shirts. Taking that into consideration, it was a success."

Air Force Capt. Michael Arguello of Joint Area Support Group-Central finished first overall with a time of 19 minutes

45 seconds. Latrendra White, an administrative assistant at the U.S. Embassy, was the first female finisher at 26:50, and Peter McCurdy was the top finisher in the over 50 year old category at 23:07.

Each participant received a certificate and a U.S. flag to carry during the run. Certificates were also presented to first place finishers in each of three categories.

This wasn't the first Independence Day run in Iraq for Capt. Doug Kolb, comptroller for the JASG.

"This is the second time in my life where I've run a race around one of Saddam's palaces for the 4th of July," Kolb said. "I'm

honored to be part of the great things we're doing here in Iraq." The JASG's human resources



JASG soldiers, Maj. Sara Dechant, a contract advisor, and Capt. Rebecca O'Keefe, a transportation officer, compete in the Red Arrow Run 5k run July 4. Photos by Capt. Joy LeMay



Capt. Douglas Kolb, comptroller for the Joint Area Support Group-Central, crosses the finish line in the Red Arrow Independence Day 5K Run July 4 at Forward Operating Base Prosperity. Kolb finished fourth overall.

director said she doesn't consider herself a runner, but she competed in both the Memorial Day Run at Prosperity and the Red Arrow Run July 4.

"I use the time to think about those that have served before me, and I'm thankful for their sacrifice so that my family and I can enjoy the freedom in the United States," Maj. Jelora Coman said. "I'm looking forward to celebrating the 4th at home next year."

The Independence Day 5K was sponsored by the Prosperity MWR office and Joint Area Support Group-Central.

The next organized run at Prosperity is scheduled for Aug. 8. It will be held in honor of Marine Corps Pfc. Ryan Jerabek of Wisconsin, who was killed in action in Iraq April 6, 2004. ■



Early morning temperatures in the 90's didn't stop 90 participants from running in the Red Arrow Independence Day 5K run July 4.



# Focus on diplomacy

## Australian soldiers protect their diplomats

Australian soldiers reorient the Australian Light Armored Vehicles prior to picking up a diplomat. The ASLAVs are similar to the U.S. Stryker but is modified for Australian conditions. *Photos courtesy of Australian Security Detachment XV*

*By Spc. Michelle Gonzalez*

The world watched as Iraqis celebrated the June 30 withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from the nation's cities, and now the focus has turned to the efforts of diplomats in a new sovereign and stabilizing country.

One country—Australia—resumed full diplomatic relations with Iraq in 2004 and has increased its efforts to reconstruct and rehabilitate the nation.

However, as Australia's diplomats strengthen political ties and foster international cooperation, a group of soldiers focuses on protecting their

diplomats.

The 15th rotation of the Australian Security Detachment—an Australian Defence Force combat team—arrived in Baghdad May 2009 to facilitate Australian diplomatic missions by providing security and support to the Australian Embassy in the International Zone.

The Middle East is not new



An Australian soldier liaises with Iraqi security guards who protect diplomatic venues to enter an Iraqi compound.



Three Australian Light Armored Vehicles patrol along the Karrada peninsula, south of the International Zone.

territory to the Australian military. Soldiers and sailors fought in the region during the First and Second World Wars and a number of them are buried at a Commonwealth War Ground Cemetery just north of Baghdad. Although they follow in the footsteps of Australian soldiers who previously served in Iraq, the ASD has a different mission.

“We’re not here to fight



with anybody,” said Maj. Nigel Earnshaw, the Officer Commanding Security Detachment XV. “We’re here to help our diplomats reinforce that,” he added.

The small group—nearly 100 soldiers drawn from infantry, cavalry, military police and combat service support—is prepared to respond accordingly if attacked.

“We’re prepared to use up to and including lethal force to protect our diplomats and achieve our mission,” said Earnshaw. “But we have no

intention of disrupting the process of legitimate Iraqi government.”

In addition to securing the embassy, the ASD works with Iraqi soldiers to secure diplomatic venues.

We interact as much as we can with the Iraqi soldiers and we want to prove that we respect their sovereignty and will always treat them respectfully while we’re achieving our mission, Earnshaw stated. “We never forget we are here to help Iraq get back on its feet.” ■

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“We’re not here to fight with anybody.”

-Maj. Nigel Earnshaw,  
Officer Commanding  
Security Detachment XV

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# Digital story time

*United Through Reading helps deployed service members stay in touch with children via DVD*

By Spc. Tyler Lasure

Being thousands of miles away from home causes parents to miss a lot of things in their children's lives: baseball games, recitals, and tucking their children into bed and reading them a story.

Thanks to the United Through Reading program on FOB Prosperity, U.S. service members can continue to read stories to their children—or siblings, nieces and nephews, elementary school classes, or any other child they would like—from thousands of miles away.

"It's something that can bring us closer together, even though we are far apart," said Sgt. Beth Hanaman, a human resources specialist with the JASG and a mother of two.

United Through Reading videotapes deployed troops reading a book to their child, then the DVD of the service member is sent to the child, who can also receive the book.

Sgt. 1st Class Sherri O'Neal, noncommissioned officer in charge of the CAC card office, started the program on Prosperity, "I was able

to do the program at Buehring. I thought it was the best way that I would be able to talk to my own kids; let them see my face and let them know that I was thinking about them."

O'Neal decided to bring the program to Prosperity after

hearing fellow soldiers wish that they had participated while at Buehring. She received the equipment

from a fellow soldier who tried to start the program before. She also received books from several donors.

The program is open to all U.S.

service members. Interested troops can go to the CAC card waiting area in the palace on Prosperity to sign up for a reading.

"I have



Sgt. Beth Hanaman, human resource specialist with the JASG reads a book to her two children as Sgt. 1st Class Sherri O'Neal, noncommissioned officer in charge of the CAC card office, focuses the camera on Hanaman. O'Neal organized and operates the program at Prosperity.

Photos by Spc. Tyler Lasure



Pfc. Jordan Maltezo, a DJ for Freedom Radio-AFN Iraq, searches for a book to read to her three children.



Pfc. Jordan Maltezo, a DJ for Freedom Radio-AFN Iraq, writes a personal message on a DVD before sending it to her children.

three children at home and anything I can do to let them know that I am thinking about them and giving them a chance to see me over here in uniform to really put everything together in their mind," said Pfc. Jordan Maltezo, a DJ for Freedom Radio - AFN Iraq. "I'm very thankful for everyone taking the time to put this together; it's so important and so needed, hopefully I will have time to volunteer, that would be great."

For more information on how to help, participate, or donate books contact Sgt. 1st Class Sherri O'Neal, or visit United Through Reading's Web site: [www.unitedthroughreading.org](http://www.unitedthroughreading.org). ■



# Hizzoner

## Wisconsin Guard officer is mayor of FOB Prosperity

He was never elected to his office, he doesn't preside over city council meetings or work at City Hall, and he won't raise your property taxes—or lower them. But if you live or work on FOB Prosperity, Lt. Col. Gary Skon is your mayor.

Skon isn't a mayor by trade. He is a Wisconsin National Guard field artillery officer — a battalion commander whose battalion wasn't technically mobilized for this Iraq mission.

But he draws on a lot of his military experience for his duties here at Prosperity.

"Being able to deal with others, dealing with both expected and unexpected issues, balancing priorities, commanding a battalion of 500 soldiers spread throughout the theater with different missions and different chains of command," Skon lists as experiences that helped prepare him to be a FOB mayor.

"But have I been involved in construction projects and contracts and bus leases and all that kind of stuff? No," he admits.

Depending on the day and who is counted,



Lt. Col. Gary Skon, mayor of FOB Prosperity.

*Photos by Spc. Michelle Gonzalez*

Skon, of course, doesn't do all this by himself. Capt. Michelle Smith is deputy mayor, covering for Skon when he's not available and also handling responsibilities of her own.

Smith is the mayor cell's contracting

FOB Prosperity's population ranges from 4,000 to 5,000 — soldiers, airmen, both U.S. and coalition, forces, contractors, Iraqi nationals, third country nationals, laborers, vendors, and visitors make up Prosperity's diverse populace. And it's Skon's job — and the members of his team — to make their lives as comfortable and productive as possible here.

"We take care of all the life support on FOB Prosperity," Skon explains. "That can mean life support in terms of billeting, soldier comfort, office space, working conditions, infrastructure, construction, power, water, latrines, shower units, parking — everything."



Staff Sgt. Ben Stine, FOB Prosperity's range noncommissioned officer, replies to e-mails and submits work orders for contractors to complete.

representative and deals with the FOB's vendors. She also oversees the FOB Prosperity support team, led by Operations NCO Master Sgt. Jennifer Zschernitz.

Staff Sgt. Ben Stine is in charge of FOB Prosperity's range and takes care of hundreds of service order requests a day, while Sgts. Chase Collram and Daniel Ruland handle FOB badging and placards. Sgts. Michael Feller and Daniel Coleman along with Spc. Josh Hoffman have contracting

responsibilities that ensure contractors fulfill their obligations. The three soldiers also work with the 20 to 30 member local national labor force and rotate responsibility for the mayor cell help desk, water distribution and general FOB cleanliness.

"They are the 'do-ers,'" Skon says of the FOB support troops, "the guys that



Sgt. Daniel Coleman and Spc. Josh Hoffman discuss vehicle maintenance and which Gators are available for the day's operations.

actually make stuff happen."

"We do what we can to make things better for soldiers," Skon said. "Whether that's in the billets, where they park, where they eat, or where they go see a movie.

"So we have a lot of balancing needs that makes it pretty complicated sometimes," Skon said.

And certainly more complicated than managing a small city of 5,000 back in Wisconsin.

With a few months under his belt as mayor of FOB Prosperity, would Skon be interested in running for mayor of his hometown of Sparta, Wis.?

"No," he said, then paused and said it again. "No." ■



Master Sgt. Jennifer Zschernitz, noncommissioned officer in charge of operations, clarifies and explains FOB policies to Prosperity's tenants.



Capt. Michelle Smith, deputy mayor of FOB Prosperity, briefs Sgt. Mike Feller and Iraqi supervisors on what duties need completion for the day.

# Operation Give

## Service members load donated supplies onto trucks

By Spc. Tyler Lasure

In the sweltering Baghdad morning heat, a group of soldiers, airmen, and civilian volunteers gathered to load four trucks with boxes of supplies for needy Iraqis.



Fareed Betros, president of Families United Toward Universal Respect—FUTURE— holds up a “Goodwill Container” donated by the Launfal Foundation through Operation Give.

that work with them such as the Launfal Foundation’s goodwill containers. The items are then shipped to FUTURE in Baghdad. FUTURE then unloads the shipping containers with the help of service members.

“We are the National Guard, we are used to people helping people, it’s what we do,” said Spc. Michael Snyder, and Illinois Guardsman with the Casualty Liaison Team at the 10<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Hospital.

About 15 volunteers unloaded care packages from two containers on to four trucks provided by a local Iraqi trucking company. The trucks are offloaded at two warehouses in Baghdad, where volunteers from Women for Future, an Iraqi

“There are all sorts of things in these boxes; there’s clothes, hygiene kits, newborn baby kits, certain medical supplies, shoes, school supplies, everything from A to Z, it all depends on what the American people want to send,” said Fareed Betros, president of Families United Toward Universal Respect—FUTURE, for short.

The items are collected by Operation Give and groups

that work with them such as the Launfal Foundation’s

women’s group organize the donations into kits for distribution to widows, orphans and the handicapped.

“They are very thankful, I have been able to speak to the recipients and they have expressed great gratitude. They are not only thankful but they are willing and wanting to give to others as a result of being a recipient,” Betros said.

The recipients aren’t the only ones who benefit.

“It makes me feel like I am having a bigger impact on Iraq,” Snyder said.

Betros plans to continue distributing donations. He also hopes Women for Future continues to develop and help fellow Iraqis.

“I am looking to the future, seeing a nationwide organization that will be able to good throughout the 18 provinces of the country,” Betros said.

For information on how to donate visit: [www.operationgive.org](http://www.operationgive.org). ■



Spc. Michael Snyder, left, an Illinois Guardsman with the Casualty Liaison Team at the 10<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Hospital, and Sgt. Craig Smith, right, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the CLT, load boxes of donations from Operation Give that will be distributed to local Iraqi families.

Photos by Spc. Tyler Lasure



Spc. Michael Snyder, right, hands a care package to a fellow Guardsman. Five members of the Casualty Liaison Team, 10<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Hospital, volunteered to help load two containers of donations onto four trucks.

# Gone fishin'

## Soldiers cast lines as a form of therapy

By Spc. Tyler Lasure

Hot and dusty central Baghdad is about as far away from northwoods fishing holes as a Wisconsin soldier can get, but some JASG troops have found a way to bring a piece of the Upper Midwest lifestyle to the Middle East.

Every Sunday a group of soldiers gets together to fish in one of two ponds on Forward Operating Base Prosperity. They usually fish in the evening, but sometimes can be found fishing as early as 5:30 a.m.

“Ninety percent of fishing is just getting out there and enjoying the time spent to relax either by yourself or with friends,” said Sgt. Carl Seim, a chaplain’s assistant with the JASG.

“The other 10 percent is mostly lying about how big the fish you caught compared to your buddy’s.”

The ponds are home to a variety of fish including asp, a European freshwater fish similar to shiner bait fish in the U.S.; barbell carp;



**Spc. Joshua Hoffman, member of Prosperity’s mayor cell, casts his line into one of two fishing lakes available at Forward Operating Base Prosperity. Photos by Spc. Tyler Lasure**



**Sgt. Daniel Ruland, a badging noncommissioned officer, stands behind fishing rules all anglers must follow.**

and the stinging catfish—described as “bacon with whiskers”.

“I have caught a total of eight fish: two stinging catfish, three barbell carp, and three asp,” said Lt. Col. John Loomer, safety officer for the JASG. “The largest fish I caught was a nine-inch barbell carp.”

While Loomer has had some success, others haven’t been so lucky.

“I have personally caught none,” Seim



**Lt. Col. John Loomer compares his first catch of the day, left, to a fisherman’s bait, right.**



Lt. Col. John Loomer, Master Sgt. Jennifer Zschernitz, Chief Warrant Officer Debra LeTexier, Sgt. Daniel Ruhland, Spc. Joshua Hoffman, Sgt. Carl Seim, watch their fishing lines for nibbles from fish in Deer Lake while gazing at the sunset over Baghdad.

said. “Wrong tackle equals no fish.”

Getting fishing supplies is tricky in the desert, so a few soldiers had poles sent from home or use a friend’s. “My mom sent me some poles for others to use,” Seim said. “She mentioned to a sports store owner that there were soldiers in Iraq fishing and the owner gave the items for free.”

Finding bait is also tricky. “We go to the chow hall or sometimes just things we get in care packages that we don’t eat and it goes bad. Bread works good and so do Gummi bears,” said Spc. Josh Hoffman, a member of the Prosperity Mayor Cell support team.

Others have a more conventional approach. “Lt. Col. Bill Kehoe



Sgt. Carl Seim uses a Gummi bear as bait to fish at one of two lakes found at Forward Operating Base Prosperity.

gave me a homemade fly fishing lure that he made for me in June. I’ve caught all my fish from that single lure,” Loomer said.

It’s not just fishing that draws soldiers to the fishing holes. Some soldiers enjoy just sitting and feeding the fish and geese in the pond.

“It’s kind of relaxing, know, the water and the quiet,” said Master Sgt. Jennifer Zschernitz, noncommissioned officer in charge of operations for the Prosperity mayor cell.

Relaxing in the silence of the pond around sunset with a cool non-alcoholic beverage in your hand—a fish nibbling at the Gumi bear on the end of your line—gives a brief opportunity to forget that you are thousands of miles from home.



Lt. Col. John Loomer hoists his third catch of the day—a barbel carp. Loomer has had the most luck in catching fish at Forward Operating Base Prosperity’s lakes.

“The best part is that, for a moment, everything passes and it’s like therapy for the mind. It’s relaxing and a good time spent with friends that I don’t get to hang out with every day,” Seim said. ■

# Chaplain's word

## Groundhog day

Chap. (Lt. Col.) Douglas H. Fleischfresser  
JASG-C Chaplain



I wondered how long it would take. Not for me, but for me to hear it! This week I heard it! "It seems like I'm living in Groundhog Day."

For those who are unsure as to my reference, Groundhog Day is a movie starring Bill Murray. The essence of the movie is that a TV meteorologist, by the name of Phil Connors (Bill Murray), is sent to Punxsutawney, Pa., to cover the annual festivities of Groundhog Day. A blizzard forces him and his team to stay in Punxsutawney overnight. Connors awakens the next morning, however, to find it is again Feb. 2. His day unfolds in exactly the same way. He is aware of the repetition but everyone else is living Feb. 2 exactly the same way and for the first time. This scene repeats itself over and over and over again.

For some, a deployment can seem like it is Groundhog Day—routinely inane, if not insane at times. What is one to do if life seems to repeat, becomes dull if not boring? Please allow me to share a few suggestions to help keep the Groundhog Day blues away from you!

1. *Expand your social circle*—Morale Welfare and Recreation provides many opportunities to get out of the CHU and into the social life of others. Take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves—volleyball, basketball, pool, cards, lifting competition, 5K runs. If you're not the playing type then maybe cheering others on is!
2. *Expand your mind*—There are books everywhere you look. Why not pick one up and begin an adventure.
3. *Correspondence courses*—What a great opportunity to knock out some of those courses that stand in the way of your career's next level.
4. *History*—We are living in the cradle of civilization and we will be able to tell stories to our children and grandchildren about this experience. Why not take the opportunity and learn much more about this country, the International Zone, the leaders through time and the depth of richness in this culture.
5. *Music*—Ever want to learn to play a musical

instrument? What are you waiting for?

6. *All of the above*—Why not wrap all those things together in one experience and join others in developing and finding out more about your spiritual journey of faith! We offer all of the above and much more at the Palace Chapel in the IZ or the Chapel where you are located.

In many places in the Bible, faith is talked about as a journey. One of those places is Luke chapter 11. The story concludes by saying, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened (vvs 9-10). Why not open your life to the Journey?"

There are many opportunities that await you so that you don't have to experience a Groundhog Day. Take advantage of all that lies out there waiting for you!

And in case you forgot how the movie ends, after seeing an elderly homeless man die, Phil vows that no one will die on "his" day and performs many heroic services each and every day, including saving a choking man and a little boy who falls from a tree. He uses his time to expand his life by learning how to play jazz piano, speak French, sculpt ice, and memorize the life story of almost everyone in town. He learns life is about caring for others, and reaching out in the "journey" of life to others. May God bless your journey!

PRO DEO ET PATRIA  
(For God & Country)



# General Order #1

Maj. David E. Hickethier  
JASG-C Command Judge Advocate



General Order Number 1 (GO1) is often a topic of conversation among soldiers. Its provisions are also often misunderstood. This article summarizes and highlights the purpose of GO1, to whom it applies, and some prohibited activities.

The purpose of GO1 is two-fold:

1. To maintain good order and discipline and ensure optimal readiness. Restricting certain activities is necessary due to the "high operational tempo combined with the hazardous duty faced" by United States Forces.
2. To foster U.S. and host nation relationships by restricting activities that, although generally permissible in the U.S., are prohibited or restricted by host nation local laws and customs.

The USCENTCOM GO1B (13 March 2006) applies to its entire area of responsibility (AOR), including the JASG-C. In addition, the Multi-National Corps-Iraq GO-1 (4 April 2009) applies to all U.S. military personnel and certain civilians while assigned to MNC-I, within the MNC-I AOR, and under the operational control of the Commander, MNC-I in Iraq or Kuwait. The MNC-I GO1 also applies to the JASG-C.

Some key provisions of GO1 specifically prohibit:

- The purchase, possession, or use of privately owned firearms, ammunition, or explosives.
- The purchase, possession, transfer, manufacture, or consumption of any alcoholic beverages. This prohibition does not apply, however, to the use of alcohol for authorized religious services.
- The purchase, possession, transfer, sale, or consumption of any controlled substances. This includes prescription medication without a valid current prescription.
- Consuming, inhaling, ingesting, sniffing, or otherwise taking into the body any substance that could prove harmful and is not used for its intended purpose.
- Introducing, purchasing, possessing, transferring, selling, creating, or displaying any pornographic or sexually explicit material. This does not apply

to American Forces Radio & Television Service Broadcasts or items distributed and/or displayed through AAFES.

- Photographing or filming of military installation access points, gates, guard towers, checkpoints, or any security measures, as well as possessing, distributing, transferring, copying, or posting, whether electronically or physically, visual images depicting the same.
- Gambling, including sports pools, lotteries, and raffles.
- Removing, possessing, selling, defacing, or destroying archeological artifacts or national treasures.
- Taking or retaining public or private property of an enemy or former enemy.
- Adopting, caring for, or feeding any type of domestic or wild animal.
- Sexual contact of any kind with Iraqi nationals or foreign nationals.
- Cohabitation, residing, or spending the night in living quarters with a member of the opposite sex. An exception may be granted for lawfully married spouses.

The prohibited activities section of the General Order is punitive. Persons who violate its provisions may face adverse administrative action, nonjudicial punishment (an Article 15), or court-martial under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. In addition, civilians serving with, employed by, or accompanying U.S. Forces may face criminal prosecution, adverse administrative action, termination of employment, or redeployment for violating GO1.

It is the responsibility of each person to know and understand the prohibitions in GO1. The best way to accomplish this is to read the entire GO1. Electronic copies are available on the MNC-I Policy Letters Web site or the JASG-C Command Judge Advocate Web site.

JASG Legal office:

Maj. David Hickethier  
Maj. Christopher Hartley  
Capt. David James  
Staff Sgt. David Sisco

# Samarra

**Editor's note**

*This month, Outside the Zone takes you to Samarra, about 80 miles north of Baghdad, where a June 30 ceremony renamed a patrol base that honored a fallen 32nd Brigade soldier.*

The changing role of U.S. forces in Iraq was evident across the entire country June 30, but in Samarra it also created a poignant moment for those who remembered Wisconsin Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Todd Olson.

Olson, who died Dec. 27, 2004, of wounds he suffered in action in Samarra early in his tour with 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, was honored at a ceremony turning a Samarra patrol base over to the government of Iraq. The outpost, Patrol Base Olson, had carried his name for more than four years.

"We have won this war because of men like Staff Sgt. Todd Olson and the efforts and sacrifices of all of our Iraqi brethren in attendance today," said Army Lt. Col. Samuel Whitehurst, commander of the 25th Infantry Division's 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

As Patrol Base Olson was turned over to Iraqi forces, its name was changed to Fond'k Albo Hera. The Arabic name translates into English as "Lake Hotel," recognizing the military post's previous use as a hotel and casino on the shore of a small lake on the city's northern edge.

More than 6,200 miles from Samarra, in Loyal, Wis., Nancy Olson was gratified with the progress in Iraq made possible by soldiers like her husband, Todd, and others who died there.

"Many of the National Guardsmen that I have talked to who are currently



**U.S. soldiers salute the memory of Wisconsin Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Todd Olson while Iraqi forces raise the flag of Iraq at the turnover of Patrol Base Olson in Samarra, Iraq, June 30. The base had been named in honor of Olson, who was killed in an attack in Samarra in 2004. It is now called Fond'k Albo Hera. U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jazz Burney**

serving in the Middle East describe a completely different place," Olson said. "They have seen a foundational change. And our military presence there will hopefully change the world."

The U.S.-Iraq security agreement calls for the withdrawal of all U.S. combat troops from Iraq by the end of 2011. One of the agreement's provisions called for U.S. combat forces to move out of Iraqi cities, towns and villages by June 30, 2009. Patrol Base Olson was among more than 100 combat outposts vacated by U.S. forces over the past nine months.

"Today we are witnessing a transition that does not divide us, but further unifies us in our combined vision to protect and serve the Iraqi people and specifically the people of Samarra," Whitehurst said.

And for the former hotel-casino—

named, until June 30, for Todd Olson—it's back to the future.

"This facility represents the tourist potential for the city of Samarra," said Army Maj. Kareem Montague, the battalion's executive officer. "Our desire is to return this asset back to the city. To do this, we first must reduce our presence here and turn it back over to the government of Iraq."

Nancy Olson agrees.

"The changeover is sign of the United States armed forces reaching their charge of teaching the Iraqi people to govern their own," she said. "This base has served as a stability footing for the region. The military personnel that have served there have offered the people security and solace." ■

*A Multi-National Corps—Iraq news release contributed to this story.*



# New champs on the court

## Fiji team wins volleyball tournament

*By Capt. Joy LeMay*

Thirty-one teams from across the International Zone competed in the Morale Welfare and Recreation-sponsored volleyball tournament held on FOB Prosperity July 11-25.

At least nine countries were represented in the double-elimination tournament, which was open to anyone who could gain access to Prosperity who wanted to compete. Countries represented on the courts included Australia, Denmark, Fiji, India, Kenya, Peru, Samoa, Uganda, and the United States.

“Our intent has always been to allow all groups, regardless of their position or FOB of residence, to participate in all of our events,” said Craig Miller, the MWR supervisor. “Our tournaments have become great melting pot events, where cultures can all come together in one place with one goal in mind,” he said.

Competitors gathered at



A player from team Islanders spikes the ball and two PPI team members jump to block the spike during a July 21 match. The Islanders—Fiji nationals who work for the U.N. contingent—narrowly won two out of three games. Team PPI is made up of Filipino subcontracted workers. *Photos by Capt. Joy LeMay*

Top: Teams PAE1 and Drifters shake hands before playing the championship match of the volleyball tournament held July 25 at FOB Prosperity.



Crowds as large as 450 cheered as their favorite teams battle it out during a volleyball competition held July 25 at FOB Prosperity.

Prosperity's two courts almost every night for more than two weeks to play under generator-operated lights. The three-game matches used 21 point rally scoring.

"My favorite part of the tournament is the competitiveness of all the teams. It is great to be out there playing and putting on a good show for all of the

spectators," said Staff Sgt. Jerry Rodriguez of team Tombstone.

Crowds as large as 450 came out to cheer and watched their favorite teams battle it out on the court. The competition offered players and spectators a chance to break away from their usual routine.

"My goal has always been simple: create events or functions that give people a temporary escape from their lives here, no matter how long," said Miller. "It's a nice feeling when a soldier comes up and says 'thank you.' That's when you know you've really made a difference."

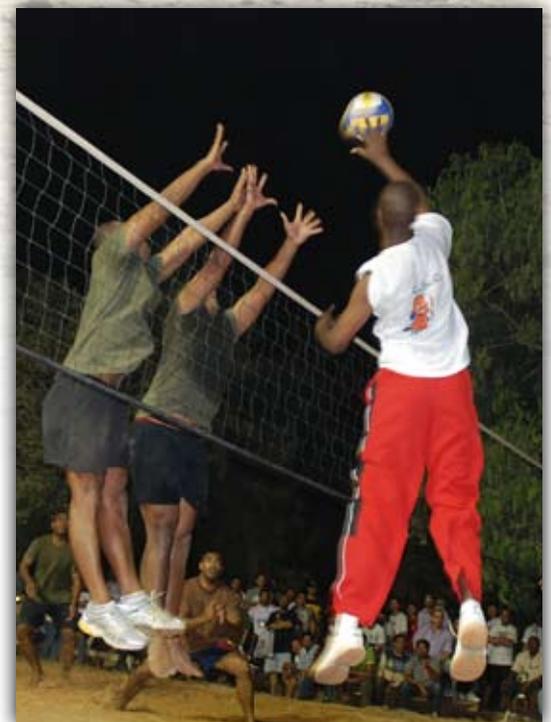
Team PAE1 from Kenya and Team Drifters from Fiji went head-to-head in the tournament's final round to compete for first place July 25. Both teams played well, but in the end, the Drifters defeated champion PAE1 in game three of the match. Plaques were awarded

to the top two teams, and a handcrafted trophy was presented to the Drifters coach.

The MWR office sponsors a variety of sporting events throughout the year, including volleyball, soccer and U.S.-style football. The next volleyball tournament is scheduled for September. ■



A Drifters player, answers a spike from team name here during the championship match held July 25 at FOB Prosperity. The volleyball tournament was held every night for almost two weeks.



A player from PAE1 spikes the ball while two Drifters jump to block during the championship game held July 25 at FOB Prosperity. The Drifters defeated the champion PAE1 in game three of the match.

# Controlling IZ access

## *Prosperity's badging cell processes applications*

By Capt. Joy LeMay

If the Prime Minister of Iraq needed to enter Baghdad's International Zone—and didn't already have an IZ badge—he would have to deal with Wisconsin Army National Guard Lt. Col. Dennis Konkel and the IZ badging cell at FOB Prosperity.

Nearly 1,000 people enter the International Zone every day.

Badges for International Zone access are issued by the Joint Area Support Group-Central badging cell, whose mission is to control access into the IZ through a sophisticated process that involves carefully screening applicants.

All non-Department of Defense common access card holders—including high-ranking officials, contractors, workers, media, and people living in the IZ—must possess credentials issued by the badging cell in order to enter the IZ.

"Everyone from the Prime Minister of Iraq to the



Mathias Seitner, a biometrics system operator, scans the iris of a badge applicant as part of the security screening process at the FOB Prosperity badging cell.

*Photos by Capt. Joy LeMay*

applicant. There are seven different access levels for badges based on the applicant's accessibility needs in the IZ.

It takes a staff of more than 50 Army, Navy and civilian personnel to run the complex, yet efficient, badging

operation. Their duties include screening applications for accuracy, entering information into the data system, taking photographs and fingerprints, scanning irises, conducting interviews, researching criminal backgrounds, and issuing badges.

"We have to be customer oriented and able to deal with all types of persons from general officers to embassy personnel, contractors to politicians," Konkel said. "It can get frustrating at times dealing with angry, impatient people, but the majority of people coming to badging are cooperative," he said.

"I'm very fortunate to have a great crew of military personnel and civilians." ■

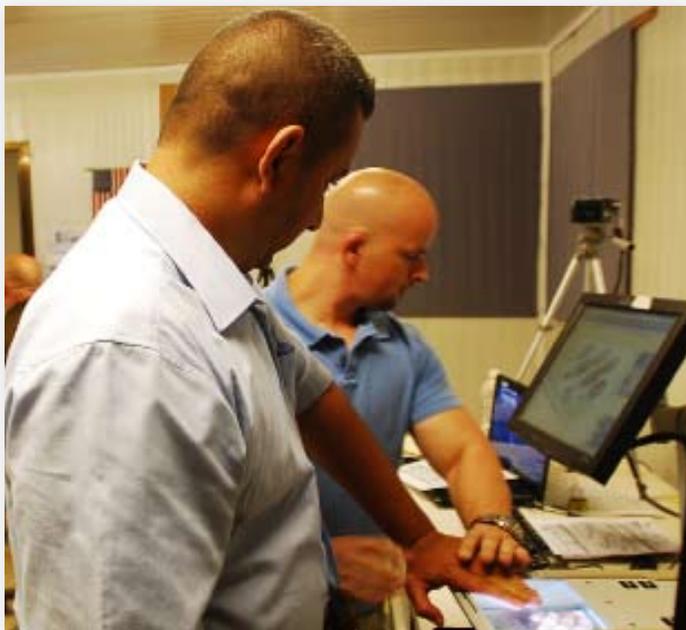
workers on the installations must complete the application process," Konkel said, "it is a highly visible operation."

The badging cell issues about 180 badges and process over 130 applications every day, and about 4,400 badges are issued each month.

Processing a security badge application can take up to two months to complete. Comprehensive background checks and biometric enrollment consisting of fingerprints, photos, and iris scans are obtained on each



Marvin Shullenberger, a biometrics system operator at the FOB Prosperity badging cell, photographs a badge applicant. Photographs are stored in a database for future identification recognition.



Mathias Seitner, a biometrics system operator, fingerprints a badge applicant as part of the applicant security screening process at the FOB Prosperity badging cell July 20.

# Parade of CHUs



Left: Bright colors and a personal touch lighten up Capt. Rebecca O'Keefe's CHU. O'Keefe, a transportation officer for the JASG, organized the Parade of CHUs to show soldiers' creativity in decorating their living areas. *Photo by Spc. Tyler Lasure*

Below: Sgt. Dwayne Booth, support operations administrative noncommissioned officer, shows off his "rockin'" wall. Booth displays the rock-themed Tshirts to show his love of classic rock music. *Photo by Capt. Rebecca O'Keefe.*

*By Spc. Tyler Lasure*

Four wood paneled walls, two twin-sized beds, two wall lockers, and one two foot square window with a T-wall barrier a few feet away: these two-person, 130 square foot-rooms are home to the soldiers of FOB Prosperity.

But living in such a place like this could drive a soldier to creativity, to adapt and overcome, to do what U.S. soldiers always do: improvise.

July 2, the best creative efforts of Prosperity's soldiers were showcased in the FOB's first-ever "Parade of CHUs." ■



Staff Sgt. Joseph Streeter, sits under his lofted bed and chats with friends in Wisconsin. *Photo by Spc. Tyler Lasure*



Above: Participants of the second Parade of CHUs eager to show off their living arrangements. *Photo by Spc. Tyler Lasure*



Left: Capt. Douglas Kolb, comptroller for the Joint Area Support Group-Central, lofted his bed creating a 'home office' below. *Photo by Capt. Rebecca O'Keefe*



# Star watch

## Angelina Jolie visits the IZ

Soldiers from the Kentucky National Guard 301st Chemical Company pose with Angelina Jolie at the Crossed Sabers July 23. Jolie—a goodwill ambassador for the U.N.'s High Commissioner for Refugees—visited a camp for displaced Iraqis and spent time with U.S. troops in the International Zone. *Photos by Spc. Michelle Gonzalez*

Internationally renowned actress and humanitarian activist Angelina Jolie made her third trip to Iraq in July. The actress is an official goodwill ambassador for the U.N.'s High Commissioner for Refugees and visited a camp for displaced Iraqis July 23.

Jolie, who recently visited wounded warriors at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, also took some time to meet with U.S. troops in the International Zone.

"I've visited Walter Reed and met many of your fellow troops and I was inspired and reminded of all the bravery of all the young men and women," Jolie said. "I'm always just honored to spend time with everybody who's spent time in the military."

Does Jolie have hope for Iraq's future?

"I do now," she said in a television interview. "This is my third trip and it's been very different every time."

"You really see the local people and the little kids talking about how much they appreciate the military and how much the military is working with the U.N.



Internationally renowned actress and humanitarian activist Angelina Jolie made her third trip to Iraq in July. During her trip she visited a camp for displaced Iraqis and also took time to meet with U.S. troops in the International Zone.

and different agencies and starting to really bring assistance to people and seeing a lot of real positive personal human stories with families," Jolie said. "It's a very different view of the war and I'm happy for all of you that you get to see all that change." ■

# Know where to go

## Life on the FOBs

### Common Access Cards

The IZ Common Access Card (CAC) office is in Room 110 on the first floor of the Palace (Bldg. 100) at forward operating base Prosperity, Monday through Saturday from 0800 to 1700. For questions, call DSN 312-239-1765 or e-mail [jasg-chrm@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:jasg-chrm@iraq.centcom.mil)

### Post office

Free mail, limited to 13 ounces, still exists for the letter home. If you are mailing pictures, a small souvenir in an envelope or packages, then you must go to the post office. Packages will be inspected and limited to three items per visit. A military ID card is required for the transaction. Civilians need two forms of identification to conduct postal transactions.

Items forbidden to be shipped include weapons items, drugs, alcohol, and perishable material. For a complete list of items, consult CENTCOM AR 25-200 or HRSC Policy 07-26.

FOB Prosperity: Located at the west entrance of the Palace. The hours are 0900 to 1700 daily.

FOB Union III: A mailbox is located in front of Bldg. 6. The post office is located in Bldg. 5. The hours are 0800 to 1730 daily.

### Laundry

Since dirty laundry is serious business, the FOBs have a seven-day-a-week laundry service that at a maximum takes three days to complete. Individuals using the service can only have 20 pieces of laundry in each bag. Blankets and comforters must be separated from clothing or uniform items.

FOB Prosperity: 0700 to 2000 daily  
FOB Union III: 0700 to 1900 daily  
FOB Blackhawk: 0700 to 1800 daily

### Dining facility

The Prosperity dining facility across from the Palace (Bldg. 100) offers four meals a day with Grab-n-go options between meal hours. Meal hours are:

Breakfast: 0600 to 0830

Grab-n-go: 0830 to 1100

Lunch: 1130 to 1330

Grab-n-go: 1330 to 1700

Dinner: 1730 to 2000

Grab-n-go: 2000 to 2230

Midnight Meal: 2230 to 0100

Grab-n-go: 0100 to 0530

The Union III DFAC across from the Bldg. 1 parking lot offers four meals a day. Meal hours are:

Breakfast: 0530 to 0800

Lunch: 1130 to 1330

Dinner: 1730 to 2000

Midnight meal: 2330 to 0100

### Medical Treatment

Those eligible for care at Troop Medical Clinics include active-duty U.S. and Coalition Forces, retired U.S. military and Department of Defense federal government employees.

Routine immunizations and Post Deployment Health Assessments are available for individuals during sick call hours. For groups of 10 or more and immunizations call the TMC to schedule an appointment.

Prosperity's TMC is located in Bldg. 87, behind the fuel point. Sick-call hours for walk-ins are Monday through Friday from 0800 to 1000 and 1300 to 1500. Medical staff is present 24/7 in case of emergency. The clinic is closed on Saturdays and Sundays. **Services now available include primary care, dental, combat stress control, laboratory, radiology and pharmacy.**

The Union III TMC relocated to the west side of Bldg. 5. Sick-call hours for walk-ins are Monday through Friday from 0800 to 1045 and 1300 to 1500, 0800 to 1045 Saturdays.

**Audiology services are now located at Phipps TMC in Balad; optometry and dermatology are located at Camp Liberty's Witmer TMC.**

### Finance

Finance operations include check cashing, Eagle Cash Card transactions, military pay issues, collection and review of travel vouchers and other military pay-related documents, and more.

Eagle Cash Card (ECC) applications are available. The service member must provide a current bank statement or LES to verify bank routing and account numbers. As a reminder, you can load up to \$350 per day to your card. You can get cash back up to \$200 per month. Checks can also be cashed for up to \$200 per month.

Prosperity finance operations are in Room 108 on the first floor of the Palace. Hours are from 0900 to 1600 Saturday through Thursday.

Union III finance operations are in Bldg. 6, A-Wing, room 2A from 0900 to 1600 Saturday through Thursday.

### Gym/ MWR

The Prosperity gym is located on the first floor of the Palace and is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The MWR center, in rooms 122, 125 and 127, are also open 24/7 and offer a large-screen television, DVDs, books, boardgames, and other fun activities.

The Union III gym is located in Bldg. 5 and is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The MWR center, next to the gym, is also open 24/7 and offers a large-screen television, DVDs, books, boardgames, Xbox and other fun activities.

The Blackhawk gym is located in Bldg. 12 and is open 24 hours. Gym equipment will be moved out at the end of July.



Spc. Timothy Gross, 301st Chemical Company, Kentucky National Guard, raises the Kentucky state flag during a transfer of authority ceremony held July 29 at Forward Operating Base Prosperity.

The 301st is replacing the Washington National Guard's Troop B, 1st Squadron, 303rd Cavalry. *Photo by Spc. Tyler Lasure*