

# The Expeditionary Times

Proudly serving the finest Expeditionary service members throughout Iraq

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<http://www.hood.army.mil/13sce/>

## Status check



Navy vice admiral visits  
deployed Soldiers in Iraq

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## Drink up



Tennessee Guard unit  
delivers water at Q-West

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## Safe travels



Q-West force protection  
company escorts convoys

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# US Army leaders meet with shaykhs in southern Iraq

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
SPC. LISA A. COPE  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

CONTINGENCY OPERATING

LOCATION AD-

DER, Iraq – Brig.

Gen. Gerald E.

Lang, the Multi

National Divi-

sion – South

deputy com-

manding general for support,

visited local shaykhs at a private

residence near Contingency Op-

erating Location Adder, Iraq,

for a key-leader engagement

to discuss how the drawdown

of forces in Iraq will affect the

shaykhs' communities.

"My main goal with Shaykh

Uday today was to discuss the

drawdown of forces and his as-

sistance ... to maintain security

on route Tampa by working with

and providing information to

the local police and Iraqi Army,"

said Lang, a Sauk Rapids, Minn.,

native.

One of the Shaykh's main dis-

ussion points was the process

of selecting contractors for area

projects, said Lang.

"I assured them that we ac-

cept contracts from every-

body, we judge all the contracts

equally," he said. "Governors

or provincial council chairman

sometimes want us to use their

selected contractors – many

times their contractors are rela-

tions or best friends. We will not

allow ourselves to get into that

corrupt type business ... We will

pick the contractor best suited

for the job."

Lang said there are very

specific rules for selecting con-

tractors for CERP projects. The

main considerations for picking

a contractor are the prices they

bid, their past history and the

quality of work they provide.

Shaykh Saheh Fahed Al-Sher-

shab, a shaykh of the Al-Bdoor

tribe, said, through an interpret-

SEE MEET ON PAGE 4



Brig. Gen. Gerald E. Lang, the Multi National Division – South deputy commanding general for support and a Sauk Rapids, Minn., native, shares a laugh with Lt. Col. Clinton Moyer, the chief of civil operations with the 36th Sustainment Brigade, out of Temple, Texas, and a Clearwater, Kan., native, and Shaykh Uday, during lunch Nov. 19 at a home in southern Iraq.

# Iraqi children learn about personal hygiene at JBB

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
SGT. JOHN STIMAC  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq –

Roughly 100 Iraqi

children partici-

pated in Iraqi Kids

Day Nov. 21 at

the H6 recrea-

tion center at

Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

The focus of the event was

on personal hygiene issues,

such as frequent hand wash-

ing and brushing teeth after

meals. The children were treat-

ed to a magic show, a puppet

show about personal hygiene

and time with mentors to play

games indoors and outdoors.

Capt. Elizabeth A. Hoettels,

a civil military affairs officer

with the 332nd Expedition-

ary Medical Group, said she

planned the health-based pro-

gram using available resources

and volunteers.

"The planning started about

a month ago," she said. "The

last two weeks have been very

busy and we were working

hard every day to make this a

success."

Hoettels, a Wauwatosa,

Wis., native, said the purpose

of the event was to provide

community public health and

education for the children.

"This is something they can

do every single day to improve

their health and have fun at the

same time," she said.

Hoettels said prevention is

the key.

"If we can teach them some-

SEE KIDS ON PAGE 4

## Balad Blotter November 18 - 25

### DAMAGE TO GOVERNMENT PROPERTY:

A complainant called the Joint Defense Operation Center and reported a hole in a fence, at an undisclosed location, which he discovered while he was driving. A patrol responded and arrived at the location. The patrol said the hole was big enough for a vehicle to drive through. The civil engineer help desk said the contracting office would have to make an emergency amendment to the 77 Construction Company contract for them to conduct an emergency work order. A special post was assumed by another patrol until the fence could be fixed. The 77 Construction Company said they would have the material to fix the fence and should start construction Nov. 21.

### UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY:

A complainant called the Joint Defense Operations Center and said one of his guards at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation east reported a subject entered the MWR and failed to properly identify himself. The patrol and witness one initiated a 100 percent identification check of all personnel inside of the MWR, in search of the subject. The patrol and witness one saw the subject exit the MWR while they were conducting the 100 percent ID check. The subject said upon arrival at the MWR, he did not know the location of his common access card. The subject said witness one denied him entry to the MWR because he had no identification. The subject also said he told witness one he had to attend a mandatory class and upon its completion he would get a memorandum. Witness one said she briefed subject to go to Provost Marshall Office to obtain a Lost ID Form and, after obtaining the form he could enter the facility for 48 hours with the form allowing time to obtain a new common access card. Witness one said the subject then proceeded to walk past her into the facility. Witness one said she followed the subject inside to obtain his name and to report him to her supervisor of personnel. Witness one said the subject covered his name tag and proceeded to spell his name. Witness two said, at roughly 1:10 p.m., he and the subject approached the entrance to the MWR, and he showed his Common Access Card and the subject did not because he had misplaced it. Witness two said he briefed witness one about the mandatory class they had to attend and assumed entrance to MWR was granted. Witness two said upon completion of the class security forces conducted a 100 percent ID check. Witness two said the subject left the MWR to get his common access card and returned to the MWR. Witness two said, at that time, Security Forces and Witness one identified the subject and apprehended him.

\*Note from PMO: Personnel need to maintain positive control of their ID cards. There has been a sharp increase in Lost ID Forms, and these items are considered sensitive material. Leaders, please disseminate this information to your troops.

NIPR: 443-8602  
SIPR: 241-1171  
Email: PMOdesk@iraq.centcom.mil

# Mental Health: a Soldier's invisible wounds of war

By CAPT. STEVE BRASINGTON  
COMBAT STRESS CONTROL PSYCHIATRIST



The recipient of five Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts, Army Maj. Gen. David Blackledge, speaks about his trauma and recovery to help reduce mental health stigma.

Writer Sharon Raboin described the general's ordeal:

"In February of 2004, Blackledge's convoy was ambushed in Iraq. The interpreter, who was sitting next to him, was shot through the head. Taking fire, the vehicle rolled. But the survivors were able to escape. He sustained a broken back and ribs, with other injuries requiring 11 months of recovery and physical therapy.

Fifteen months after the ambush, Blackledge was deployed back to Iraq. While in Amman, Jordan, for meetings, he was in one of three popular hotels that were struck by terrorist bombs. The explosions killed more than 55 people and injured more than 110. He suffered a neck injury."

Blackledge told reporter John J. Kruzel, "Within a day of me being at Walter Reed, a psychiatrist came to me ... and talked to me about what was going on. He also told me what to expect; I told him at the time that the ambush kept replaying in my mind."

The general said the psychiatrist continued to work with him to address recurrent nightmares and other symptoms associated with trauma. At the time, he was concerned about psychiatric care damaging his career.

After the ambush in Iraq, the general was injured in the November 2005 bombing of hotels in Amman,

Jordan. Following his exposure to the blast, he suffered disturbed sleep and difficulties with shorted attention span.

He said, after this injury, he was more concerned with the impact on his long-term health than the impact on his military career. This time he sought to resume the care that had been interrupted by his second deployment.

Note that recurrent deployments can interrupt healing and recovery from trauma. Willingness to resume or restart therapy is essential to a positive outcome. Recovery takes not only willingness to try again, but a commitment to stick with it for the long term. The general's recovery took many months of active participation in the healing process.

Most importantly, the general trusted the psychiatrist to manage his case in a manner that would not disqualify him from continuing to serve as a senior leader. The general accepted care at the Pentagon Clinic. He did not need to go outside the military healthcare system, nor did he conceal his regular visits to mental health. Blackledge understood that more important than fear of others learning about his struggle with post traumatic stress was the need to share his story of healing and recovery.

The combat stress prevention team encourages you to tell your story to others who have a similar story. If you are developing symptoms that interfere with normal functioning, come tell your story to the professionals at combat stress.

Blackledge did not go it alone. His family, staff and colleagues supported his need to heal the invisible wounds months after the visible scars had healed.



*All service members,  
I don't have any family members in Iraq, but I  
wanted to say that you are all missed back home.  
We all wish for you to have a swift and safe return  
home. May your next holiday be safe at home with  
family and friends.  
-Michael Bannerman-*

## EXPEDITIONARY TIMES

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96th Sustainment Brigade  
41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team  
155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team  
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing  
194th Engineer Brigade

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**Mission Statement:** The Expeditionary Times Staff publishes a weekly newspaper with the primary mission of providing command information to all service members, partners, and Families of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) team and a secondary mission of providing a means for units on Joint Base Balad to disseminate command information to their audiences.

# The Weekly Standard: counseling

By SGT. 1ST CLASS TAMERA WYNN  
13TH ESC ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL



Counseling is the basic responsibility of every leader and an important part of taking care of Soldiers. Counseling responsibilities range from holding scheduled, structured counseling sessions to reacting to positive and negative situations as they occur.

Counseling will be conducted within 30 days after the beginning of the rating period and quarterly for all noncommissioned officers, warrant officers, chief warrant officers 2 and second lieutenants through captains. All other ranks should receive an initial counseling and then be counseled on a quarterly basis as needed.

During performance counseling sessions, leaders conduct a review of a subordinate's duty performance in a certain period. Simultaneously, the leader and subordinate jointly establish performance objectives and standards for the next period. Rather than dwelling on the past, focus on the future – the subordinate's strengths, areas of improvement, and potential.

Event-oriented counseling involves a specific event or

situation. It may precede events such as appearing before a promotion board or attending training. It can also follow events such as noteworthy duty performance, problems with performance or mission accomplishment, or a personal issue. Examples of event-oriented counseling include:

- Crisis counseling
- Instances of superior or substandard performance
- Promotion counseling
- Reception and integration counseling
- Separation counseling

Counseling is all too important to the Soldier and leader alike. It provides a path to success or a way forward from a setback.

Leaders need to look at counseling as a way to shape their subordinates and as a way to "check the block."

Sometimes Soldiers deserve a poor evaluation or to be chaptered from the Army. In those instances, the leader is making the call that the Army does not condone service members' performances and/or needs their continued service. The leader cannot justify the poor evaluation or chapter from the Army without the required counseling to accompany the action.

Be a leader and counsel when needed, good or bad.

## Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

Do you know your reporting options? An unrestricted report is made when a victim wants to participate in the military justice process or when the chain of command or law enforcement becomes involved. A victim advocate is assigned, command and law enforcement are notified, and medical care is provided. Active duty victims have the option of making a restricted report. Restricted reports are kept confidential – command and law enforcement are not notified. The victim can access care and services without participating in the military justice system. Call the Joint Base Balad Sexual Assault Response Coordinator at 443-7272 or contact via pager 443-9001, 159 for help. Army members should seek assistance with their Unit Victim Advocate or deployed SARC; Soldiers may also call 433-7272 or 443-9001, pager 122/135 for assistance.

Joint Base Balad: DSN 433-2125 Lt. Col. Reginald Howard (Command Inspector General) Maj. Scott Peters (Deputy) Master Sgt. Roy Thacker (NCOIC) Sgt. 1st Class Danilo Egudin Sgt. 1st Class Javier Cruz Q-West (15th SB): DSN 827-6115 Lt. Col. Kyle Peterson	Taji (96th SB/ 155 BCT): DSN 834-3079 Lt. Col. Timothy Norton/ Lt. Col. Paul Bird Adder/Tallil (36th SB/ 41 BCT): DSN 833-1710 Lt. Col. Melanie Meier/ Maj. Jeffrey Copek Al Asad (96th SB): DSN 440-7049 Sgt. 1st Class Tamera Wynn
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Interested in a movie?

Check the movie schedule on Page 20

# Chaplain's Corner: gifts given, never forgotten

By Lt. Col. Willie Ailstock  
13TH ESC DEPUTY COMMAND CHAPLAIN



A pastor in Philadelphia began a Sunday school for children in his neighborhood. Its meeting room was small and many children had to be turned away. Hattie May was one of the fortunate ones who was not

turned away, but she went to bed every night unhappy because many of her friends could not come with her to Sunday school.

Two years after the Sunday school began Hattie May died of a childhood disease. Her parents immediately called the pastor and asked him to come to their home.

When the pastor arrived, they told him this story. Hattie May's parents found a worn red pocket book beneath her pillow. It had 57 pennies in it and a note.

The note read, "This is to help build the Church

bigger so more children can come to Sunday school."

For two years the little girl had been saving her pennies she earned to help build the church bigger.

The next Sunday, the pastor got into the pulpit with the little red pocket book, dumped the pennies into his hand and one by one began counting as he shared Hattie May's story.

This little girl gave all she had and a miracle took place.

At the end of the service, a guest came forward and offered some very desirable land for a new church building. The down payment would be exactly 57 pennies.

When this story got out and the newspapers ran it, checks came from far and wide.

You can go to Philadelphia today and see the Temple Baptist Church with a seating capacity of 3,300 and a Sunday school building large enough to accommodate every child who wants to attend.

It all began with a little girl that gave all she had.

Can I suggest that it is not the size of the gift that is given but it is the size of the heart of the giver that matters?

In Mark chapter 8, we find 4,000 people who were hungry and all the disciple could muster up to feed them was a little boy's lunch containing seven loaves of bread and two small fish. The little boy gave all he had to Jesus, and we know the rest of the story.

What to us might seem small and insignificant when it is given with the right heart to the right person can result in amazing outcomes.

Jesus takes the little that we give and multiplies it. If we will give our inadequacies to him, he can multiply them into abundance. He can take our insufficiencies and make them sufficient.

Never be afraid to give because what you have may seem small or inadequate to you. Give with the right heart to the right person and you just may experience a miracle.

## Give a Shout Out!

Tell your family and friends how much you miss them.

Send a brief message to: [expeditionarytimes@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:expeditionarytimes@iraq.centcom.mil) Subject line: "Shout Out"

# Visit keeps relationship strong and Soldiers safe

## MEET FROM PAGE 1

er, he would normally go through the Americans to get a contractor to fix any problems he had in his area, but many of the responsibilities that once rested on the Americans are carried out by the mayor, as the drawdown progresses.

He said the meeting with Lang was designed to enhance their relationship with U.S. forces, and discuss business in the area and the new process for selecting contractors.

Spc. Lina J. Michael, an Arabic interpreter with the 36th Sustainment Brigade out of Temple, Texas, said meetings like this keep the local population informed and let them know that U.S. forces work with them even as they prepare for the drawdown. Maintaining good relations in the area keeps Soldiers safe, she said.

"Visits like that show the Iraqi side that we are still working with them and we can also hear their opinion, what they are really wanting from us," said Michael. "If we keep working with them, they will keep securing the area for our troops."



**Brig. Gen. Gerald E. Lang, the Multi National Division – South deputy commanding general for support and a Sauk Rapids, Minn., native, meets with area leaders Nov. 19 at a shaykh's home in southern Iraq.**

Lang said the safety of his troops on the road was on the forefront of his mind throughout the meeting.

"What I would like to see is contin-

ued support from (Shaykh Uday) and his tribe at identifying criminals, identifying extremist groups that continue to put (improvised explosive devices)

on the road, and also to have him work closely together with the Iraqi Army and police in providing them with that information," said Lang.

# Iraqi Kids Day provides health education for children

## KIDS FROM PAGE 1

thing as simple as washing their hands every time, we can possibly prevent them from spreading diseases," she said. "Simple things like that they can do at home and then go back and show their friends. Kids like to show their friends new things they learn."

Sgt. Matthew Carpenter, a chaplain assistant with the 90th Sustainment Brigade, said if the class can get five to 10 kids out of 100 to learn about hygiene-related behavior it is a success, because they can teach others.

Carpenter, a Portales, N.M., native, said this is his second time as a mentor here, and he plans to attend all such events in the future.

"I love spending time with the children," he said. "This is my second time with the same child and he remembered me from last time. Zakaria didn't have a mentor and I asked if I could mentor him again."

Through an interpreter, Zakaria said Carpenter is "a really nice guy, he is helpful and is always happy."

First Lt. Troy Novak, the executive officer for the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group, said this is a great way to create relationships between service members and the local community.

"Events like these let the local communities around us see why we are here and what we are doing here," said Novak.

He said the event puts a face to people on both sides of the fence as service members and local nationals interact with one another.

"These events make our troops happy and make them feel like they are part of the overall mission, especially



**First Lt. Brandon Sanders, assistant director of operations with the 732nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron and a San Diego native, plays a game with an Iraqi child at Kid's Day Nov. 21 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. It was the first time girls participated in the events.**

the ones that never see the outside of this base," said Novak

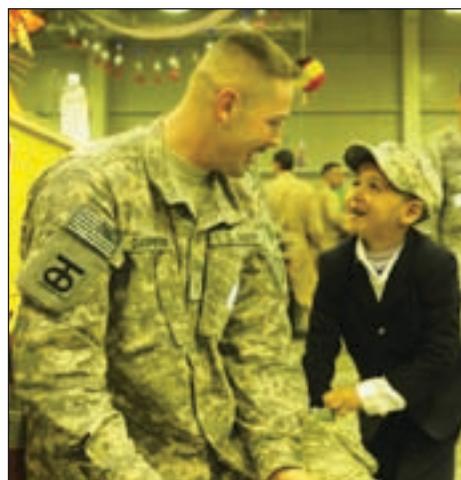
Future kid's day events are already being planned.

Hoettels said this was the first time girls could come to the base with chaperones and midwives.

"There were 40 girls here today and it was absolutely thrilling that they have come to participate," she said.

Novak, an East Grand Forks, Minn., native, said a kid's day exclusively for females is scheduled Dec. 12 and another kid's day is scheduled during the holidays.

"Hopefully, these kids will look back and say they remembered when the Americans were here and I shook their hands and played games with them," he said. "I'd like to think that they will remember that instance and that it was a positive experience for them."



**Sgt. Matthew Carpenter, a chaplain assistant for the 90th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Portales, N.M., native, shares a laugh with Zakaria, a child at Iraqi Kid's Day Nov. 21 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Carpenter was Zakaria's mentor at an all day event that focused on children's hygiene**

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# Navy vice admiral visits Soldiers in Iraq

STORY BY 1ST LT. MARIA SCHMITZ  
264TH CSSB

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION SPEICHER, Iraq



- Navy Vice Adm. Alan Thompson, director of the Defense Logistics Agency, had lunch Nov. 13 at Contingency Operating Location Speicher,

Iraq, with Alabama National Guard Soldiers from the 2025th Transportation Company, out of Jacksonville, Ala., with the 264th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

Four Soldiers with the 2025th, including its senior noncommissioned officer, work for the DLA as civilians at the Defense Depot at Anniston, Ala.

Thompson talked to these Soldiers about their overall mission, their missions outside the wire and their civilian work.

The Anniston Army Depot focuses on most tracked-vehicles in the U.S. inventory. This focus includes inspecting



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Benoit

**First Sgt. James Ponder, the senior noncommissioned officer with the 2025th Transportation Company, out of Jacksonville, Ala., speaks with Vice Adm. Alan Thompson, the director of the Defense Logistics Agency, Nov. 13 at the Contingency Operating Location Speicher dining facility. Ponder works for the DLA at the Defense Depot at Anniston, Ala.**

overhauled vehicles, storing them, minor repair and preparation for shipping to various units throughout the world, said 1st Sgt. James Ponder, of Jackson-

ville, Ala., shop chief at the depot.

The DLA is a logistics combat support agency that provides supplies and services to America's military forces world-

wide, he said. It supports every branch of the military and has roughly 21,000 military and civilian employees worldwide. Thompson has been the director of the DLA since November 2008, said Ponder.

Thompson said the DLA provides spare parts that keep trucks, such as those used by units like the 2025th Trans. Co., running.

"The services provided by these Soldiers while they work for DLA on the civilian side, will in turn benefit those in their military unit," Thompson said.

Thompson visits Iraq a couple of times a year to check on the support DLA provides, he said. He said it also gives him the opportunity to thank his DLA team members who are deployed here.

"Three-hundred and fifty DLA employees are forward deployed," said Thompson.

These employees are a combination of both civilian and military personnel, he said.

"It was an honor to meet my civilian boss," said Ponder. "Our Soldiers were glad to have a chance to meet their DLA director."

## Guardsmen pursue education through distance learning

BY CAPT. MURRAY SHUGARS  
2/198TH COMBINED ARMS

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq



Members of a Mississippi Army National Guard convoy security company stationed at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq, are furthering their civilian educations through distance learning, said an officer in the company Nov. 21.

Soldiers with A Company, 106th Brigade Support Battalion, out of Magee, Miss., with 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms out of Senatobia, Miss., spend free time reading textbooks and doing coursework for various degrees, said 1st Lt. Nicki J. Shaw, the company's executive officer.

Shaw said roughly 10 percent of the company takes online courses, working toward associate, bachelor's and master's degrees.

"It's a really good thing for Soldiers to be able to work on getting their degrees during a deployment," said Shaw, a Florence, Miss., native. "Even with all the convoy missions, they can find time to study. It helps their civilian careers, improves their military promotion opportunities and keeps them out of trouble."

First Sgt. Troy D. Scott, who is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree, said he finds the process difficult but rewarding.

"The biggest issue I have is finding time because my schedule keeps me busy," said Scott, a Pearl, Miss., native. "Things pop up all the time, so it's difficult to find study time. During a mission, when we get to a destination, I can sometimes borrow someone's computer to get work done before we leave out."

Scott said he waited too long to begin post-high school studies.

"I made the mistake of waiting 30 years before deciding to get a degree," said Scott, who is studying science in management. "It's a challenge, learning the technology, and I am working hard to improve my computer literacy. Young people grow up with computer skills that older folks have to learn, and it's like learning a new language."

Scott said a good civilian education has become important in a military career.

"You have to have some college training to perform," he said. "For instance, if you hope to become a sergeant major in today's Army, you have to have good writing skills. One of the main things a sergeant major does is write policy and the Sergeant Major Academy is academically equal to an associate's degree."

Staff Sgt. Kenley E. Feazell, a platoon sergeant and a New Hebron, Miss., native, agreed.

"A civilian degree is important for a military career, even for enlisted," said Feazell. "It helps with promotion and makes you a more capable leader. Also, I want to be an example to my

children. I wouldn't want my children to do something I couldn't do myself."

A full-time Guardsman, Feazell said the degree will help him find a second career when he retires from the military. Even so, the process was a big commitment, he said.

"I completed my degree this month, a B.S. in accounting," he said, "but it was tough finding the time when you're planning and going on missions every week. I studied late at night or early in the morning, working on four to six hours of sleep."

Capt. Bradley S. Hollingsworth, commander of A Company and a Florence, Miss., native, also said a civilian education has become more important in a military career, because Soldiers are becoming more highly qualified.

"The quality of Soldiers has increased across the board," said Hollingsworth. "Education becomes the deciding factor on a job. When you're comparing two equally qualified Soldiers and only one has a civilian degree, the degree holder will edge out the other Soldier. You see this among enlisted personnel and officers. These days, officers need to have a master's degree to compete for promotion and positions."

Hollingsworth said it was important to him to support Soldiers in every way possible.

"My first sergeant and I do everything we can to support Soldiers who want to continue their education during deployment," he said. "We make

information available to them and we help them find the time they need. We try to steer them in the right direction. We make sure they use their down time productively, bettering their mental and physical fitness."

Staff Sgt. Myrna G. McCullum, a truck commander and a Collins, Miss., native, has been working for eight years on a Bachelor's of Science in psychology, which she said she hopes to finish in the coming year.

"I am a mother first, so I do this when I can," said McCullum. "Finishing a degree is all about discipline. You have to make a plan and stick to it. I have assignments due every three weeks and I have to stay on top of it. I am an early morning person, so I get up at 4:00 a.m. to work on my classes."

McCullum said she appreciates being able to get a degree through distance learning.

"I love online study," she said. "I can be home for my kids and I don't have to deal with traffic. I can set my own schedule."

McCullum said aspiring students should get their degrees while they are young.

"My advice to Soldiers is don't wait on getting an education," she said. "It gets harder with age, believe me, and it's so important these days. With an education, you can go somewhere with your life. You can explore opportunities and get out front with your career. Having a degree makes opportunities open up."

# Financial company counts down remaining days of deployment

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
STAFF SGT. WILFREDO GARCIA  
96TH SUST. BDE.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Soldiers with B Detachment, 101st Financial Management Company out of Fort Campbell, Ky., await word of their replacements.



B Det., 101st FM Co., with the 96th Special Troops Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), arrived in Iraq Jan. 13, replacing the 24th Finance Company.

Their task was to maintain and improve financial operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom including commercial vendor services, military pay operations, disbursements and paying agents operations.

Sgt. 1st Class Sharon Gamble, the detachment sergeant and a Woodlawn, Tenn., native, and Capt. Camilla M. Swain, the detachment commander and a Lynchburg, Tenn., native, review the final exit plans for the transfer of authority while working to maintain the detachment's morale.

"With diligence, the Soldiers disbursed over \$162.2 million in operational funds to include casual payments," she said.

Gamble said the military pay section has maintained an accuracy average of 99 percent throughout the deployment, which is higher than Defense Finance and Accounting Services requirement of 98 percent.

"The commercial vendor services section received and reviewed over \$50 million in vendor contacts, trained over 300 paying agents to be accountable for government funds, and maintained reports of all Soldiers within Camp Taji and the surrounding areas through the unit commander's financial reports program," said Swain. "The detachment also issued over 2,000 Eagle Cash cards in an efforts to reduce U.S. dollars from the battlefield operations."

The detachment, known as the Black Hawks, will redeploy to Fort Campbell, Ky.

Squad leaders have started Soldiers preparing their packing lists and their personal containers for shipment.

"In the end, we can look back one day and tell our families we were there," said 2nd Lt. Katherine Palesky, the disbursing agent, and a Plano, Texas, native. "When our children read the history books, they can smile in pride to see that their fathers and mothers were amongst the names of Soldiers who answered the call of their great nation."



Cpl. Daniel Voloaga, the disbursing non-commissioned officer in charge with B Detachment, 101st Financial Management Company, 96th Special Troops Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade and a Junction City, Kan., native, and Staff Sgt. Colbie Jackson, a deputy disbursing manager with the unit and a New Orleans, La., native, explain entitlements to a Soldier just arriving in Iraq.

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# Retrograde yard aids in drawdown of equipment

BY SPC. JASON EVERETT  
96TH SUST. BDE.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – In six years of operations in Iraq, U.S. forces have accumulated equipment that must be moved out of country as the drawdown draws closer.



The Pacesetter Retrograde Yard at Camp Taji, Iraq, serves as a one stop shop to drop off serviceable parts, unserviceable repairable parts, medical equipment and communication equipment units no longer need.

Maj. Arturo Lincon, the support operations officer with the 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion and an Eagle River, Alaska, native, said the task is no small feat.

"Units have accumulated a great deal of stuff; this equipment has been handed from unit to unit as forces continue to redeploy," said Lincon. "As we drawdown the forces in Iraq, there is no unit to hand it off to – we have to do something with it."

The warehouse has a team of Soldiers at the PRY who do the initial sorting and identifying of equipment they receive.

This job belongs to Sgt. Terry Sachs, a foreman with the 96th Sustainment Brigade and a Sandy, Utah, native, who sends the serviceable items back to the 541st warehouse to be processed and distributed back into the Army supply system.

"This mission is not a race, it is a marathon," Sachs said.

Spc. Jeff Halligan, a job processor with the PRY and a Chicago native, said the yard needed improvement when the

unit arrived in country.

"We can see the product of our hard work as the systems we put into place take effect," Halligan said.

Once the items are sorted and sent back to the warehouse, they fall under the control of Sgt. Scott Todd, the non-commissioned officer in charge with the 3666th Maintenance Company, 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion and a Florence, Ariz., native.

"It is our responsibility to process the parts," Todd said. "Once they are deemed serviceable, they go back into the Army supply system. In just three and a half weeks, we have processed over \$3 million worth of equipment. That is a huge dollar amount that the Army does not have to spend on replacing items that we are still finding out here from ... 2003 to 2004. The credit goes to the Soldiers; they have really

made this mission their own."

Spc. Delilah Ruiz, an administrative clerk and a Bagdad, Ariz., native, praised the Soldiers' cohesiveness.

"We really click together as a team," Ruiz said. "Our NCO's guidance and mentorship really contribute to our positive work environment."

Spc. Lorraine Perez, an administrative clerk with the 3666th and a Phoenix native, said the Soldiers at the PRY see the outcome of their mission and understand the great amount they accomplish for the Army.

"Units here on Camp Taji can get critical items in minutes, rather than the months that it usually requires through the traditional supply system," said Todd. "It saves the companies money, since these items have already been purchased and are ready for immediate use."

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# Transportation Soldiers become combat veterans

STORY BY SGT. JULIA NORBERG  
96TH SUST. BDE.

AL ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq – Soldiers with the 1218th Transportation Company, 751st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) placed shoulder sleeve insignias, commonly known as combat patches, on their right shoulders for the first time Nov. 8 at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq.

In accordance with the current regulations outlining uniform wear and appearance, the 1218th, a National Guard unit out of Florida, will wear the patch of their parent brigade, the 164th Air Defense Artillery Brigade.

“This is more than a piece of cloth, a bunch of thread sewn together,” said Capt. Scott Peterson, the 1218th company commander and a West Palm Beach, Fla., native. “This patch represents us and by wearing it, it represents our story and what we did here.”

First Sgt. Bobby Parlor, a Wellington,



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Richard Dungan

First Sgt. Bobby Parlor, with the 1218th Transportation Company, 751st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Wellington, Fla., native, with Pfc. Bradley Newton, the flag bearer and a Tallahassee, Fla., native, holds a company formation prior to the start of the 1218th Trans. Co. combat patch ceremony Nov. 8 at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq.

Fla., native, said the unit is one of only two in the brigade authorized to wear that patch as its combat patch.

“That means something special for not only the Soldiers, but the unit in general,” Parlor said.

Although the ceremony was short, Soldiers who earned a combat patch

for the first time said the moment was memorable.

Pfc. Joseph James, an operations specialist and a Fort Lauderdale, Fla., native, said, “First sergeant grouped all of us together who earned patches at the end of the ceremony. He ripped off his old combat patch and put on the new

patch. That was impressive and it meant a lot to me, and us, as first time deployers.”

“I am proud to have a combat patch,” Spc. Terrill Smith, a wheeled vehicle operator and a West Palm Beach, Fla., native, said. “When I go home it will prove that I have been there, done that.”

## Senators visit deployed Soldiers

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SPC. LISA A. COPE  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION ADDER, Iraq – Illinois Sen. Roland W. Burris visited Soldiers from his home state at Contingency Operating Location Adder, Iraq, Nov. 24 at Memorial Hall to answer their questions and talk about programs available to them.

Burris, a Centralia, Ill., native, said he serves on three committees in the Senate aimed at helping service members: the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

He and the two Oregon state senators he traveled with planned to make a trip to Afghanistan as well as Iraq, he said, but were unable because they needed to be back in time to vote on President Barack Obama's healthcare bill.

Burris said the trip was a learning experience.

“(The goal) was to come over to learn and see how our troops are being treated,” said Burris. “Making sure everything is being handled and (hearing) what our boots on the ground have to say.”

Staff Sgt. Raymond Hookfin, headquarters' platoon sergeant, with the 66th Transportation Company out of Kaiserslautern, Germany, and a Chicago native, met with and asked Burris a few questions.

“I thought it was a good opportunity



Illinois Sen. Roland W. Burris, a Centralia, Ill., native, poses for a picture with Illinois National Guardsmen Sgt. First Class N. Michael Simard, a UH-60 Black Hawk flight platoon sergeant with A Company, 106th Aviation Regiment out of Decatur, Ill., and a Charleston, Ill., native, and Staff Sgt. Joseph D. Seitz, a UH-60 Black Hawk crew chief with A Co., 106th Aviation Regiment out of his hometown of Decatur, Ill., Nov. 24 at Memorial Hall at Contingency Operating Location Adder, Iraq.

to get a chance to speak with my senator,” said Hookfin. “To speak with him and ... voice my opinions. It was a great opportunity to be heard.”

Hookfin said Burris spoke to the Soldiers about veterans' benefits, specifically medical care and the new G.I. Bill.

“A lot of the Soldiers, when they came back from Vietnam were not ... treated fairly ... and they want to make sure the same thing doesn't happen to us when we return from our deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan,” he said.

Hookfin said he was impressed Burris traveled so far to visit his Soldiers, and believes the visit was worthwhile.

“It was a once in a lifetime opportunity, and I came out – even after working a long day – I still wanted to come out to take the opportunity to meet my senator,” said Hookfin. “It was worth the time, worth the time spent.”

Burris said he appreciates the hard work of men and women in the military who defend Americans' freedoms.

“The only way America could stay strong, free and safe, is because we have a strong military,” he said. “To all the service men and women from Illinois and across this country ... Hang in there, continue to defend us and we appreciate it. God bless you.”

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3. Power strips and outlets are not overloaded.
4. Smoke detector is operational.
5. Fire extinguisher is serviceable (in the green)
6. Room is neat and orderly

# Coast guardsmen train in counter-IED class

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SGT. JOHN STIMAC  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Counter-improvised explosive device training can mean the difference between life and death for any service member who travels outside the wire on convoys.

A C-IED level two training class was held Nov. 19 at Debro Range at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, featuring members of the U.S. Coast Guard for the first time.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Alan R. Hooch, a C-IED and electronic warfare officer with the 90th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Columbia, Ill., native, said the purpose of the training was to teach service members how to protect themselves and their equipment from IEDs.

“This class will give them a perspective of what an IED is, what types are being used and how to protect themselves,” he said.

Hooch stressed vigilance, observance, preparedness and knowing what to look for.

There are three different levels of C-IED training, all of which can be taught at JBB.

Hooch said level one training is an hour-long overview that usually takes place at Camp Buerhing, Kuwait, during the mobilization process.

“In level two, we conduct a class and actually go out and do a walk-through lane and a drive-through lane, in which we place IEDs in various places on or near roads,” he said.

The level three class lasts three days and, in addition to level two

training, participants learn how to be instructors themselves, he said.

Hooch said he usually conducts training once a month, but the frequency depends on how many people request the training and on the availability of the range. He also said this was the first time the Coast Guard trained on C-IED level two.

“We contacted them, they said they would be interested in attending and then we scheduled a time and date,” he said.

Petty Officer 1st Class Benjamin D. Rosen, a hazardous materials inspector with the Coast Guard Redeployment Assistance and Inspection Detachment, said he learned a lot about identifying different types of IEDs and how to spot them on the road.

“Overall the day was a success,” he said. “We identified all the IEDs, had good classroom training and, if we are in a convoy, it will be very useful.”

Rosen, a Jacksonville Fla., native, said his favorite part of the class was going out in vehicles to look for mock IEDs and exiting the vehicles to inspect them more closely.

“I like training that is more hands on,” he said. “This training is very important. The more experience you have in dealing with it, the better.”

Staff Sgt. Phillip Duby, an operations noncommissioned officer for the 90th Sustainment Brigade, and Saginaw, Mich., native, said he wanted the students to always practice situational awareness when they leave the base.

“I want them to know what to look for, what the dangers are and what you can do to protect yourself,” said Duby. “I am happy with giving them the knowledge that could help save their lives.”



Chief Warrant Officer 4 Alan R. Hooch, a counter-improvised explosive device officer with the 90th Sustainment Brigade and a Columbia, Ill., native, sets up a mock IED for the C-IED level two training class Nov. 19 at Debro range at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

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# Security forces along Iraq, Turkey border inspect trucks

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SGT. RYAN TWIST  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

HABUR GATE, Iraq – Along the border of Iraq and Turkey, U.S. service members, Iraqi security forces and contractors work together to ensure the safety of Iraq's citizens.

At the validation yard in Habur Gate, Iraq, KBR, Inc., employees, Iraqi Security Forces and U.S. Soldiers check transportation movement requests and validate cargo on incoming trucks, said Sgt. 1st Class David A. Holder, the non-commissioned officer in charge with the 561st Movement Control Team Detachment, out of Springfield, Mo. Holder, a Waco, Texas, native, said they look for anything that is illegal and not on the cargo list.

The 561st MCT is assigned to the 49th Movement Control Battalion, 90th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), to track cargo being moved in and out of the Iraqi theater of operation.

"The main mission here at the border is to get coalition trucks from Turkey, that come through the validation yard; we process those trucks from our yard to go south," said Holder.

If there are items on the truck that are not supposed to be there, the validation yard workers identify those items and prevent them from moving farther into Iraq, he said.



**Sgt. 1st Class David A. Holder, the noncommissioned officer in charge with the 561st Movement Control Team Detachment out of Springfield, Mo., watches a truck driver open his vehicle at the validation yard at Habur Gate, Iraq. Holder, a Waco, Texas, native, inspected the truck for items not on the transportation movement request before the driver could process his paperwork and wait for a convoy south into Iraq.**

Dlshad Hassin has been an Iraqi security officer for customs for three years.

"You try to cross the border, they have to check your load, because some stuff that crosses the border may be expired," said Hassin through an interpreter. "Too many times we catch some stuff that (is) illegal."

Hassin said drivers try to hide extra items on their trucks and sometimes try to drive away from convoys altogether to

avoid being caught. Iraqi security forces and the U.S. military work together to ensure this does not happen, he said.

Holder said those extra items can be as substantial as cars.

"We've had a vehicle that was inside the truck ... The Kurdish police contacted us and we came over and broke the seal on the truck and found it in there," he said. "That truck did not go farther south. We immediately stopped it and

turned it over to the Kurdish police."

The vehicle was inside an 18-wheel semi-truck, alongside other items the driver planned to sell, said Holder. The car was not on the manifest and it was not supposed to be on the truck, he said.

When drivers do not follow the rules and try to sneak items, steal fuel or avoid necessary checks, they are put on a restrictions list, said Holder.

"We have a restrictions list ... we will stop that truck from going south," he said. "We turn them over to the authorities here, to the customs police."

Holder said the military has a working relationship with the local nationals and KBR, Inc., employees, who love the American presence.

"We have a great relationship here, and one thing we want to do is maintain communications with the customs," he said. "I feel without that relationship ... it creates bad vibes."

Holder said after the validation yard, the truck drivers process their paperwork and go to the staging and holding yard to wait for convoys. The main goal is to process the vehicles and get them to their designated contingency operating location as quickly as possible, he said.

"Get them in, get them out," he said.

Roughly 3,000 Iraqi and Coalition vehicles go through the process each week, said Holder.

"I think it's a very good operation here," he said. "We handle our business and we do it very well."

## 15th Sustainment Brigade to open info tech testing center

BY SGT. RYAN TWIST  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq -

Soldiers with the Special Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade may soon lead the way in obtaining the latest industry certifications from Iraq.

Warrant Officer Sylvester Price, a

communications technician with the brigade, said certifications allow individuals to validate their expertise in their industry, and are especially prevalent in the constantly changing world of information technology.

"These certifications provide a high-level skill set for the Soldiers," he said. "This will allow (Soldiers) to market themselves better."

The A Company, Pearson/Vue Testing Center is scheduled to open in December, in a room provided by the 15th STB, said Price.

Soldiers will be able to take Computing Technology Industry Association exams there, he said. CompTIA is a non-profit organization that provides introductory certifications for people entering the IT world, said Price.

"As we get more people to participate, we will add more options for Soldiers," he said.

Price said Soldiers can obtain vouchers that allow them to take certification exams at a reduced price.

"Having the option to obtain certifications on (COL) Q-West encom-

passes a multitude of advantages that we are really lucky to have," said Capt. Adrian Robinson, the A Co. commander.

These certifications will allow the 15th Sust. Bde. Soldiers to stay current with IT industry changes and eventually be better prepared for career opportunities within and outside of the Army.

"We have the ability to receive the most up to date training there is to offer (and) to become more proficient in (our) tasks," said Robinson.

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# To the service members of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary):

Thank you doesn't seem like saying enough to all of you wonderful men and women of the U.S. Army or, as my family and I like to say, "our Army." Over the past few months in our hometown we noticed that there had been a change in people's attitude toward military service. We didn't see the yellow ribbons and American flags like we used to and it seemed that the idea of another terrorist attack was farther and farther from people's minds. Everyone forgot that we truly do live in a dangerous world and there are indeed certain groups of people who wish us harm for simply being American. To us, this is a far cry from a few short years ago when everyone knew the quality of those who serve our country and were deeply committed to supporting their efforts.

Sadly, this all changed with the terrorist attack at Fort Hood. I say sadly because, until then, many of our fellow citizens had turned a blind eye toward the military and it took something of this magnitude to bring it all back into focus, at least for a little while. I guess it is easy for some to forget there are American men and women bearing unimaginable hardships and just enjoy the safety they provide in blissful ignorance. Before that Friday, there were only vague stories about the sacrifices and well being of individual Soldiers. Now every news network and paper has an opinion about the stress levels of Soldiers. It is funny now that we are constantly reminded we cannot discriminate against an entire religious group for the actions of a few. However, that is what is happening to you, the American Soldier. The actions of one individual are not seen and reported for what they are. Instead, the mental stability of all Soldiers is being called into question so as not to offend anyone.

When I think of this I have to admit I, as an American, am profoundly ashamed. Not for my actions but for the actions of the vocal few who have taken this tragedy as an opportunity to further an agenda at the expense of the best and the bravest of this country. I think of myself as a simple man who is neither well traveled nor well versed in the ways of the world. However, I do know, even though the majority of Americans know the truth, this behavior is detrimental to the morale of Soldier and citizen alike. A Soldier knows better that anyone the costly price of freedom and he or she carries this knowledge quietly so we, the ordinary citizens of our great land, do not have to. I find it disturbing that there is a belief now that the military and violence go hand in hand when, in reality, there is nothing farther from the truth. A Soldier never prays for war but spends many a private moment praying for peace.

At a time when we, the ordinary citizens, are consumed with carbon emissions and universal health care, we do find it all too easy to forget those who truly make a difference in the lives of people around the world, the U.S. armed forces. Again, the vocal few ignore the amazing accomplishments of our military in the past eight years and focus on issues that sound really good but in the long run don't accomplish very much. I won't pretend to understand the nuances of international diplomacy or domestic policy. However, I do know there are tens of thousands of people in war torn areas who greet even a rumor of the arrival of the U.S. military with gratitude and relief. They do this because they know with these men and women comes a chance for peace, security and the hope for a better tomorrow. I am not sure why we don't see more of these facts on the evening news.

Our family simply believes the efforts of the U.S. Army are just and they are having an impact far beyond the security of our beloved country. I hope with all of this you will understand why I had to do something to let you know that you are appreciated, and why I could not go farther without saying I'm sorry. I apologize as a citizen of the United States for the way we as a people have treated you, the heroes. I truly wish that I could have come up with something that would have been an inspiration to you but all I can offer is the voice of one American family to simply say "Thank You."

Sincerely and respectfully,

Steven and Diana Rogge

Farmington, N.M.

# Tennessee Guard unit delivers water at Q-West

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SGT. MATTHEW C. COOLEY  
15TH SUST. BDE.  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq – Soldiers with the 1174th Transportation Company deliver more than 30,000 bottles of water weekly throughout Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq.

The water is pumped in from the Tigris River by an Iraqi civilian company, to a Q-West water purification facility. An American civilian contractor facility then bottles and palletizes the water before sending it to a sustenance storage facility for delivery by the 1174th Trans. Co., 395th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

Sgt. Larry Turnage, an 1174th truck driver and Memphis, Tenn., native, said despite rumors of water shortages in the past, no one has ever ordered him to deliver fewer bottles to the troops and civilians here.

“We’ve been steady rolling,” he said.

Turnage and Spc. Calvin Wilhite, an 1174th wheeled vehicle mechanic and a Memphis, Tenn., native, drive the large flatbed trucks used to deliver the water.

“Everybody needs water,” Wilhite said. “Who else is going to load it? (Our job) is very important.”

Raymond Roehr, a civilian contractor equipment operator and a Pasadena, Texas, native, drives the 8,000 pound forklift that takes the water pallets off of the trucks and places them near containerized housing units and work areas.

“You’ve got a responsibility there – somebody has to do it,” said Roehr, a former Sailor and Soldier.

Delivering water around Q-West is a small part of the 1174th Trans. Co.’s mission, Turnage said.

This transportation company transports a variety of equipment and supplies throughout Multinational Division – North, the 15th Sust. Bde. Wagonmasters’ area of operations, he said.

Turnage and Wilhite are on



**Raymond Roehr, a civilian contractor equipment operator and a Pasadena, Texas, native, takes a pallet of water bottles off of an 1174th Transportation Company, 395th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) truck to deliver it to a work area Nov. 18 at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq.**

the company’s load team, which prepares trucks for their next mission and allows drivers to rest after long hours on the road

and back-to-back, or “turn and burn” missions, said Turnage.

“(The) morale of the guys is high – strong,” he said.

Wilhite said he believed it was all a part of the job.

“I’m just being a Soldier,” he said.

# New citizens welcomed in ceremony

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
CPL. RICHMOND BARKEMEYER  
96TH SUST. BDE. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

VICTORY BASE COMPLEX, Iraq – Veterans Day took on another special meaning when 157 service members from 60 countries were granted their United States citizenship in a ceremony Nov. 11 at Al-Faw Palace at Victory Base Complex, Iraq.

More than 1,300 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines have received their citizenship while serving in Iraq, said the ceremony’s host, Lt. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby, Jr., commanding general of Multi-National Corps – Iraq.

“They have already been contributing in the most meaningful way to the strength of our nation, while looking forward to the day when they could claim citizenship in America,” said Jacoby. “They have embraced the call to serve our country and offer their talents, abilities, and futures as members of the United States armed forces, while working together to accomplish the mission here in Iraq.

“I can think of no better time, no better place and no better way to honor the devoted service of these men and women, than to celebrate the American traditions of inclusion, acceptance and service.”



**Sgt. Michael Williams, a cargo handler with the 21st Inland Cargo Transfer Company and a Kingston, Jamaica, native, prepares to take the oath of citizenship in a naturalization ceremony Nov. 11 at Al-Faw Palace, Victory Base Complex, Iraq. More than 1,300 service members have received their citizenship while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.**

Sgt. Michael Williams, a cargo handler with the 21st Inland Cargo Transfer Company out of Ft. Lewis, Wash., was born in Kingston, Jamaica, and was living in New York City when a family member encouraged him to join the Army, he said.

“My aunt is in the military, so she got me in,” he said.

Williams said he began the process of getting his citizenship two months ago, after being encouraged by a fellow Soldier. He said his citizenship offers opportunities that would have otherwise been unavailable to him.

The process took considerably more time for Pfc. Ancharad Simeon Shoon, a truck driver with the 1218th Trans-

portation Company, 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary). Shoon, 21, was born in Trinidad and Tobago, and moved to Miami 13 years ago, he said. He began applying for his citizenship five years ago while in high school, and said some of his family members are still in the process of gaining citizenship.

“It’s a big accomplishment,” said Shoon. “Now that I have it, things will be a lot easier for me and a lot easier for my future family.”

Williams said he appreciated the importance of the ceremony.

“It feels overwhelming just being a part of this event, finally getting my citizenship and getting to spend this moment with my wife,” he said. “I’m very glad.”

Williams’ wife, Spc. Cristina Williams, is also serving in Iraq as a member of the 21st ICTC.

In his speech, Jacoby praised the efforts of all the service members present and officially welcomed them as new citizens.

“You have really taken up the mantle of responsibility and, with your actions, demonstrated your allegiance to America,” he said. “You represent opportunity, resilience and a freshness of the American spirit. Today, we welcome you as brothers and sisters, and as fellow citizens of our great nation.”

# Q-West force protection

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
CAPT. MURRAY SHUGARS  
2/198TH COMBINED ARMS

**CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq** — In a continued effort to draw down excess equipment, a Mississippi Army National Guard unit conducted a convoy mission from Contingency Operating Location Q-West to Contingency Operating Location Speicher, Iraq, Nov. 9.

Soldiers with A Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms, 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, a mechanized infantry unit out of Hernando, Miss., serving as COL Q-West's force protection company, escorted the 40th Transportation Company tractor trailers loaded with vehicles and equipment.

A Co. Soldiers conducted force protection missions up to now but performed well during their first convoy escort mission, said Capt. Drew Clark, company commander and a Madison, Miss., native.

"We follow a standard procedure," he said. "The planning process of every mission outside the wire and planning for this convoy security mission wasn't much different."

Second Lt. Jeffery T. Watkins, 2nd Platoon Leader, said he did a leaders reconnaissance of the convoy support center yard, studying procedures to exit the base.

"The biggest differences in the planning were including convoy support center yard operations and mastering the briefing process," said Watkins. "My fellow platoon leaders from other companies assisted me greatly by sharing samples of their briefs."

Watkins said he learned how to position the mili-

tary tractor trailers, also called green trucks, crews and vehicles with the 40th Transportation Company, 57th Transportation Battalion, out of Fort Lewis, Wash. The convoy commander, Staff Sgt. Kenwith Scott, did a rehearsal the day prior to the mission's execution.

"Staff Sgt. Scott and his assistant convoy commander, Sgt. Claybon Turner, went through the brief for me and Capt. Clark, and we gave him suggestions for revising and for briefing," said Watkins. "Staff Sgt. Scott lined his squad trucks up in the company area as we do before every mission, and Capt. Clark and I inspected their vehicles to ensure everything was in place for the next day."

The mission was routine and uneventful, said Clark

"The convoy had to stop a couple (of) times because of issues with the green trucks," he said. "One truck had an overheating engine and another truck had to hook up to the load. We also stopped because a green truck had to readjust its load tie-downs. Otherwise, we had no issues."

During these halts, the A Co. gun trucks performed their security duties according to well-rehearsed battle drills, said Watkins.

"Once we got on the road, the mission was basically the same as other missions we've done, such as route reconnaissance," said Watkins. "During the halts, my Soldiers secured the convoy and got good accountability. We had no issues."

Clark said the Soldiers are versatile learners, adapting quickly to changes in tactics, operations and missions.

"We sent out the quick reaction force once to round up 19 civilian trucks stranded in Mosul without military security, but that wasn't a full blown

convoy escort," he said. "We went out there and brought them back to Q-West, and we didn't go through the longer planning process for normal convoy missions."

The Soldiers have to stay flexible, said Watkins.

"We constantly have different missions," he said. "Besides being the QRF, we've done route reconnaissance, perimeter patrols, security for missions to the Qayyarah pump house and along the water pipeline, and patrol base operations out of the pump house. We come from the infantry and convoy escort is similar to patrolling. We might have to plan differently, but we have a lot of experience with patrolling."

The range of missions is good for morale, said Watkins, because it keeps the Soldiers fresh — not doing the same routine every day.

The diverse missions also help to build confident and competent leaders, said Clark. Squad leaders and team leaders must step up and help plan and execute the missions, and this develops them professionally, he said.

"The Soldiers adapt real quick to changes in tactics, operations and missions," said Clark. "The key to our success is the noncommissioned officer leadership in this company."

One Soldier who has seen his responsibilities increase is Sgt. Claybon Turner, assistant convoy commander on the mission and Veteran of the 155th HBCT's 2005 deployment to Iraq.

"This is my first time as assistant convoy commander on a big mission," said Turner, a Eudora, Miss., native. "We had a lot of planning to do and that's the biggest difference between this deployment and my last deployment to Iraq. Back then, I wasn't an NCO and didn't have as much responsibil-



Sgt. James J. Hamblin, a gunner with A Company, 198th Combined Arms, out of Hernando, Miss., and a Tupelo, Miss., native, inspects his M249 Squad Assault Weapon in the Q-West Convoy Support Center yard before a Nov. 9 mission. This was the first convoy security mission for Q-West's force protection company.



Guardsmen with A Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms, out of Hernando, Miss., and Soldiers with the 40th Fort Lewis, Wash., take a security halt during a Nov. 9 convoy mission from Contingency Operating Location Q-West to Speicher, Iraq. This was the first convoy security mission for Q-West's force protection company.

# company escorts convoys

ity. I had to make sure I was ready for missions, and now I have a crew to manage. This time, I've learned a lot about mission planning and administrative paperwork."

Sgt. Dreamus Harron, a vehicle commander and a Brookhaven, Miss., native, is another veteran of the brigade's last deployment who now shoulders greater responsibility.

"During the last deployment, I wasn't a team leader, so this time I had to mature a lot," he said. "There's a lot I didn't understand before. Now I know the big picture, all the things that go into preparing for missions."

Harron said he finds himself nurturing future leaders in the company.

"My crew is totally new, just out of basic," he said. "Before we deployed, they were scared; I had to work with them to build their confidence. They didn't know what to expect, but now they know and they step up ... The whole platoon has really come together over the last months."

Staff Sgt. Kenwith Scott, convoy commander and a Rosedale, Miss., native, said the deployment has developed him as a small unit leader.

"I am a stronger NCO now," he said. "I had to learn more about personnel and administrative paperwork. I've also learned more about planning operations. All of these are good management skills and will help me in the future."

Scott said he believes in the importance of the U.S. presence in Iraq.

"What I want people back home to know is that the U.S. military is doing important work over here," he said. "We're here to help give Iraqis something Americans take for granted – the right to have a choice in their government and in their lives."



Sgt. Asia Thompson (left), of Lawrenceburg, N.C., and Spc. Steven Thompson, of Tarrytown, N.Y., inspect the tie-down of an armored security vehicle under the watchful eye of Sgt. Denise Labo, Olalla, Wash., in the Q-West Convoy Support Center yard Nov. 9. They were among the Soldiers of the 40th Transportation Company, out of Fort Lewis, Wash., who hauled vehicles and equipment to COL Speicher in a convoy secured by Mississippi Guardsmen from A Company, 198th Combined Arms, a Hernando, Miss., unit that serves as the Q-West force protection company.



Capt. Drew Clark, commander of A Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms out of Hernando, Miss., and a Madison, Miss., native, chats with local children Nov. 9 just outside Contingency Operating Location Speicher during a security halt on a return convoy mission to Q-West. This was the first convoy security mission for Q-West's force protection company.

Transportation Company, out of Contingency Operating Location

# Soldiers rest, learn from locals at Habur Gate

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SGT. RYAN TWIST  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

HABUR GATE, Iraq – As convoys escort trucks across the border between Turkey and Iraq, Soldiers take advantage of one of Iraq’s most accommodating cities to rest between missions.

Service members and local nationals at Habur Gate operate a former hotel building, converted into a place where Soldiers eat, sleep, relax and recover while they wait for their next convoy mission.

“(Our) mission is to provide communication for the convoys coming in and out of (Contingency Operating Location) Q-West and other parts of Iraq ... (give Soldiers) a resting home for overnight stays and make sure everybody gets supplies,” said Pfc. Andre R. Taylor, a central processing mode operator with the 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), out of Fort Hood, Texas. “Convoys stop here to pick up their trucks from the (Movement Control Team) yard and head back to where they came from.”

Capt. Estan N. Davis, commander of the Logistical Task Force 15, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 15th Special Troops Battalion with the 15th Sust. Bde., said the building operates on a 24-hour schedule.

“We are here to provide a safe, secure, stable environment for the Soldiers that are coming in from the road,” said Davis, a Waterford, Vt., native. “We provide a secure place that they can re-



**Capt. Estan N. Davis, commander of the Logistical Task Force 15 with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 15th Special Troops Battalion with the 15th Sustainment Brigade, out of Fort Hood, Texas, watches his Soldier drive a fork lift to pick up cargo from inside the truck. Davis, a Waterford, Vt., native, helps run a former hotel building, which was converted into a place where Soldiers eat, sleep, relax and recover while they wait for their next convoy mission.**

main overnight, refit, refuel, re-supply and then head back out.”

Spc. James L. Prince, a convoy driver with 2nd Brigade, 114th B Battery out of Kosciusko, Miss., with the 155th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 13th ESC said he escorts trucks to ensure their secure arrival to their destination.

“Everybody is somewhat excited to come up here,” said Prince, a Madison, Miss., native. “Basically, it is a place where we can chill, hangout and lay low.”

Davis said the building the Soldiers stay in has a 24-hour dining facility, a Morale, Welfare and Recreation center, a Post Exchange and a gym.

The MWR has a TV to watch movies rented from the PX, a pool table, a foosball table, and board games.

There are also places to sleep and shower, as well as 24-hour Internet access.

Outside, service members have access to a basketball court and soccer field, on which they challenge the local

nationals to play, he said.

The Soldiers running the building try to make it feel as close to home as they can, he said.

Davis said they run a facility sick call twice a day, and 24-hour communications support out of the building as well.

The Soldiers also get opportunities to go outside Habur Gate occasionally, said Taylor, a Killeen, Texas, native.

“We get opportunities like once a month to get out and see the actual city of Zakho,” he said.

Taylor said the morale of the Soldiers is high and the stress is low at Habur Gate because Kurdistan is a low-key area.

Stress also stays low because the Soldiers did not have to train on new jobs like other service members aiding in the drawdown, he said.

“For most of the Soldiers, this is the first time they’ve interacted with anybody outside of the United States on a daily basis,” said Davis. “For the local nationals, some have been here five or six years working here in this building. They have been around Americans and our culture. They understand it and it is easier for them to help the Soldiers relate to being in a foreign country.”

Davis said the Soldiers and local nationals interact well because they both want to learn from each other and make the rotation a success.

“They are mentoring and coaching youngsters that haven’t been here to experience a deployment before,” he said. “It’s really easy to see the kind of impacts that we make here, working in such a tight-knit group.”

## Where are my photos?

You can find them on Provider Common!

Start ---> Run  
Type: \\balafsvlizn03\PROVIDER\_COMMON

--Select "PAO" from the JBB homepage

--Select "Provider Common" in the left hand column

# Castle Heights wins 6th annual Thanksgiving Day competition

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SPC. MICHAEL V. CAMACHO  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Castle Heights, dining facility three, took the title of best DFAC at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, in the sixth annual Thanksgiving Day competition, part of a joint forces food event Nov. 26 at JBB.

Five dining facilities at JBB competed against one another, evaluated on decoration, menu, theme and culinary presentation. They were judged by food service representatives from both the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and the 332nd Expeditionary Force Support Squadron, said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Mark Sutton, food service technician with the 13th ESC.

Second place was taken by Desert Inn, DFAC four, and in third place was Mirage, DFAC two, said Sutton, a Lebanon, Ind., native.

It takes skill to create the sculptures and decorations used in the competition, said Sutton. It is the aesthetic arrangement they evaluate, he said.

Sutton said the DFAC workers used limited materials to make the works of art. It is a huge undertaking, and the DFACs planned for two months in preparation, he said.



Sculptures made of food decorated the five dining facilities at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, for the sixth annual Thanksgiving Day competition. A team of judges from both the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and the 332nd Expeditionary Force Support Squadron evaluated the DFACs based on their menus, culinary artwork and decorations.

Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Bates, noncommissioned officer in charge of Castle Heights with the 50th Multi-Road Bridge Company, 37th Engineers

Battalion, said the preparation and planning started in August. Service members worked with their civilian contractor counterparts, dedicating

long hours to the sculptures decorating the DFAC, he said.

"A lot of these guys are not school trained, a lot of them did it free hand," said Bates, an Atlanta native. "Like the watermelon carvings; they just looked at a picture and carved it themselves."

Matthew Manoj, Castle Heights manager and a Serka contractor, did much of the planning.

"I got ideas, I'd explain it to the guys, and I have some talented artists who just make it happen," said Manoj, a Kerala, India, native.

Manoj said he is proud of the effort his team put into the event, Castle Heights' last as it is slated to close at the end of November. This motivated the staff to work harder in the competition, he said.

"All the DFACs did an outstanding job," said Sutton. "They're all winners, but there's some that place a little higher than others. It was a letdown when I went back to another dining facility to present them with second place."

The competition boosted the morale of the troops and the contractors in the spirit of Thanksgiving, said Sutton. He said they hoped to make everyone serving in Iraq feel a little more at home.

As Castle Heights prepares to close its doors, it claimed one last trophy.

"It was a bittersweet victory," said Bates.

## Native American Heritage Month marks difficult, honorable legacy of 'vanishing Americans'

BY SGT. 1ST CLASS  
CLAUDIA K. BULLARD  
145TH MPAD

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION SPEICHER, Iraq — They have been called the "vanishing Americans" and still remain perhaps one of the least understood cultures on American soil.

Nevertheless, Native Americans have played an integral part in both the defense and building of the United States.

Two Soldiers, Sgt. Albert Gentry and Spc. Drew Deck, both members of the 2025th Transportation Company, with the 264th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, continue that tradition at Contingency Operating Location Speicher, Iraq. Each brings a different perspective to his time here.

"I knew from when I was a little kid

that I wanted to serve," said Gentry, who has been working on a degree in history in between three deployments to Iraq.

Gentry's grandmother was a librarian and has traced his family line back seven generations to a Revolutionary War Soldier, to Civil War participant Gen. Edmund P. Gaines and to a Cherokee ancestor. His father also fought under Gen. Douglas MacArthur in the Philippines.

His great aunt still makes her own soap at her home in the Tennessee hills. As a boy, Gentry picked up arrowheads at a nearby creek bed, where they fell during fighting between the Iroquois and Cherokee.

Gentry, a Georgiana, Ala., native, said looking back is important, "not to point fingers but to learn from our mistakes."

"History teaches us who we are and who the tribes are," he said.

He said Native American values

such as honor and courage in combat are essential for building a strong society.

Deck agrees. As a member of the Eastern Band of the Cherokees, Deck consulted with tribal elders at council before he committed to becoming a Soldier — a decision not taken lightly among tribal members and never undertaken just for monetary reward, he said.

Although he also follows in the footsteps of ancestors who fought in the Civil War and uncles who served in the U.S. Navy, he was moved to join after his friend was killed in Iraq, he said. This is Deck's first deployment.

"I also sat down with my grandfather before I joined and talked to him about how I felt and he really encouraged me," he said.

It was for this reason Deck urged all young people to follow their gut instincts and their hearts, when choosing a career path.

Both Gentry and Deck said they hope Native American Heritage Month will be a learning opportunity for those outside the culture, inspiring people to look deeper into Native American culture than what they see on television.

"I think Native Americans are still portrayed as mostly war-like," said Deck, emphasizing that this stereotype is a carryover from the Indian Wars and not the reality many still believe to be true.

Gentry said this is where the importance of studying American history comes into play, revealing the significant contributions Native Americans have made in sports, literature, education, and the arts and sciences, as well as the U.S. military.

"It's not to lay blame, but instead to educate and remember the tribes that didn't survive the westward expansion, and how much they could have added to American culture today," he said.

# Deployed magician brings laughter, entertainment to service members

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SPC. BETH GORENC  
TASK FORCE 38 PUBLIC AFFAIRS

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Mechanics, emergency medical technicians and truck drivers use their civilian skills when they deploy, but Chief Warrant Officer William “Scott” Anderson had a little more up his sleeve.

Anderson, a medical evacuation pilot in Task Force 38’s medevac unit, C Company, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, brought his civilian skills as a magician to Joint Base Balad, Iraq, using illusions mixed with comedy to entertain his fellow service members, civilian contractors and Iraqis.

Anderson, a Canby, Ore., native, earned the praise of coworker Sgt. John McCully, a medevac crew chief and a Camas, Ore., native.

“He’s professional when he needs to be, but he can lighten the mood when it’s needed,” said McCully.

In his free time, Anderson performed shows at the medevac company’s coffee shop, during holidays and at unit events. He also participated in, and won, Joint Base Balad’s October talent show.

“He has helped the morale of the company,” said McCully. “Whenever we have events, at work, pretty much whenever he’s around, the guy has a gimmick up his sleeve. He loves entertaining people.”

Anderson’s illusions ranged anywhere from impromptu card tricks for friends and pulling a signed dollar bill out of an uncut lemon randomly chosen by the participant who signed it, to “transforming” handkerchiefs into candy for Iraqi children.

“He is good at building relationships with people,” said Sgt. Candice Westlund, flight operations noncom-



Chief Warrant Officer William “Scott” Anderson, a medical evacuation pilot with 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment and a Canby, Ore., native, prepares an illusion during his magic show for Task Force Double Eagle Oct. 31 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

missioned officer and a Corvallis, Ore., native.

Anderson worked through translators to perform shows for groups of Iraqi children during base-hosted events and completed illusions for the Iraqi special weapons and tactics offi-

cers. He also worked with parents to entertain children at the hospital here.

“His tricks make kids smile and forget that they are in pain or injured,” said Westlund.

While entertaining others and helping them through the deployment, An-

derson said his magic provided an outlet for him.

“It’s a piece of home I got to bring with me,” he said. “It’s something I can do that’s fun and it is good for stress.”

Anderson said he has been a performance magician since 1999, when he entertained elementary kids at Fort Lewis, Wash., during drug abuse resistance classes he taught using illusions he learned from a friend. From there, he expanded his audience to birthday parties, state fair goers and stage acts including large scale illusions, he said.

“The better I got, the more shows I could get,” said Anderson. “I was doing side jobs at nights and on weekends.”

When he deployed to Afghanistan, Anderson continued his magic shows to entertain Soldiers and Afghans, he said. He continued to develop his shows by incorporating personal experiences from his deployment, and used those experiences to once again entertain Soldiers and Iraqis during his latest deployment, he said.

“After being here and performing for Iraqi kids, I came up with a kids’ show to do back home,” said Anderson. “It teaches kids lessons in patriotism: what it means, freedom, taking pride in your country, celebrating diversity and patriotic symbols.”

Working under the name of “Sgt. Stripes,” Anderson is scheduled to perform his show, “The Magic of Patriotism,” when he returns home, for Oregon students enrolled in reading programs.

He said he plans to continue performing as a magician for larger audiences after this deployment. In his free time, Anderson said he worked on his newest show, “The Magician Expeditions,” a biographical theater magic show based on his deployment interactions and experiences.

More information about Anderson and his shows can be found at <http://www.illusionsofanderson.com>.

## Q-West shines light on sexual assault

BY STAFF SGT. ROB STRAIN  
15TH SUST. BDE. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq – Nearly 200 service members walked two miles together to raise awareness of sexual assault Nov. 20 at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq.

The 395th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion hosted the “Shine the Light” two-mile walk, to promote sexual

assault prevention and let potential perpetrators know people are watching, said Staff Sgt. Elaine Gray, a unit victim advocate with the 395th CSSB.

“It’s like a neighborhood watch,” Gray, a Wolcott, Conn., native, said.

The walk took a two-mile route through COL Q-West and focused on using proper night safety equipment, such as flashlights and reflective belts, as well as the buddy system for both Soldiers and civilians, she said.

Gray said it was important for Soldiers to take a buddy with them whenever they went anywhere, especially af-

ter dark, and to let someone else know where they are going to prevent becoming a victim of sexual assault.

“We are a family,” she said. “It affects all of us.”

The event also emphasized the importance of reporting cases of sexual assault, said Capt. Jack Strong, a mental health provider with the Combat Stress Center here.

Strong said only 25 percent of active-duty victims report cases of sexual assault.

Embarrassment or lack of knowledge about the reporting process may lead to

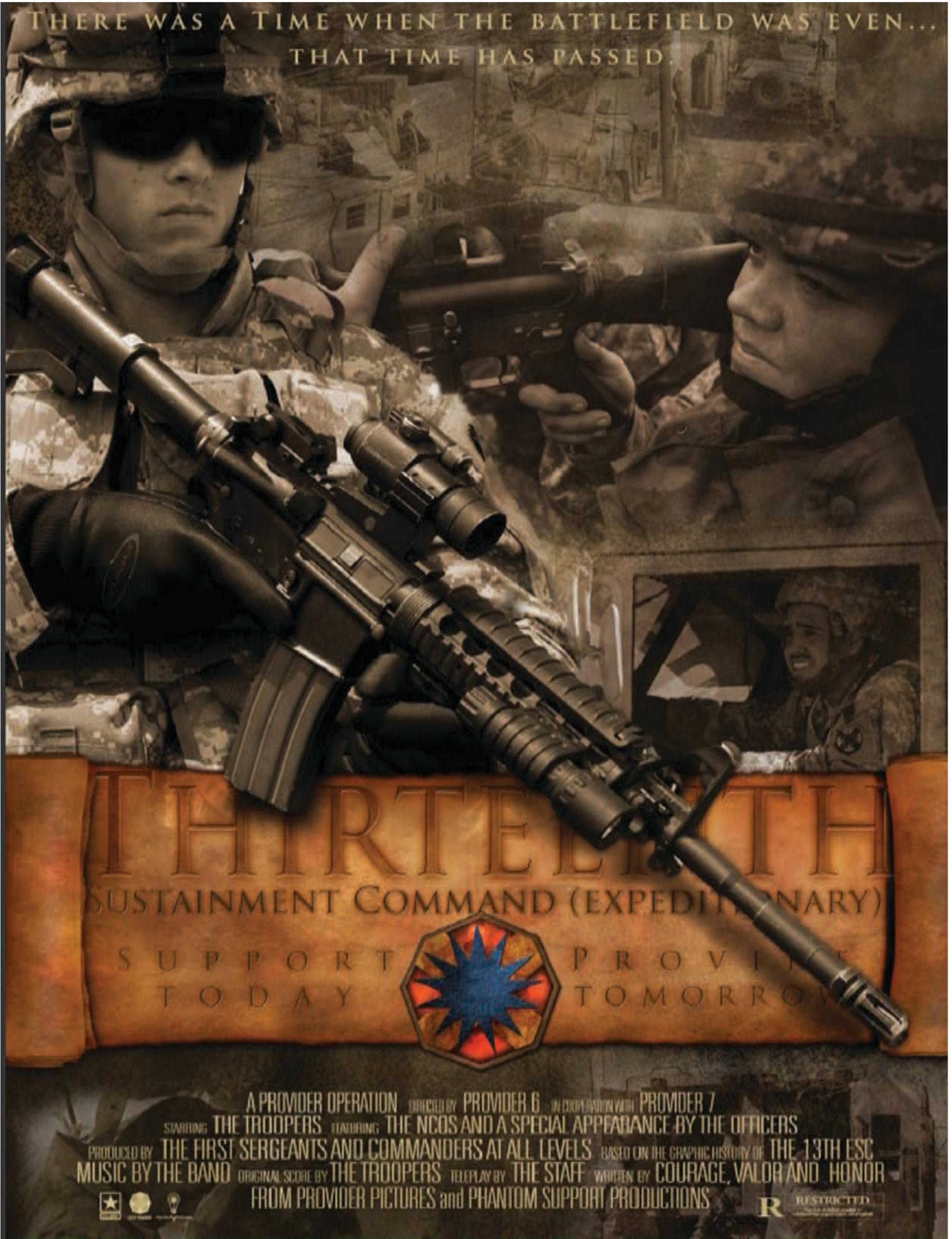
unreported incidents, said Strong.

“We need to get the message out,” he said.

Strong encouraged the audience of walkers to look out for their buddies and make sure those that need help get it, by talking to a mental health specialist or a chaplain.

There were more than 2,900 cases of sexual assault in the Department of Defense in 2008, said Lt. Col. Dennis Dockery, commander of the 395th CSSB.

“One was too many,” he said. “The answer starts with engaged leadership.”



THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE BATTLEFIELD WAS EVEN...  
 THAT TIME HAS PASSED.

THIRTEENTH  
 SUSTAINMENT COMMAND (EXPEDITIONARY)

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# Soldiers continue long, winding road, re-enlist while in Iraq

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
STAFF SGT. JEFF LOWRY  
TASK FORCE 38 PUBLIC AFFAIRS

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – With economically stimulating programs in place and the chance to make lasting memories, nearly 10 Task Force 38 Soldiers have re-enlisted.

"There's a bonus that's available to traditional National Guard Soldiers who are in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait," said Staff Sgt. Lee Ann Hiser, the Task Force 38 retention noncommissioned officer.

The bonus was \$5,000 if a Soldier signed a six-year contract, Hiser said. It was given in a tax free, lump sum, she said, but the money comes second to service.

"They get to stay in the Guard; that's their bonus," she said. "That's the biggest thing."

Hiser said there are other benefits to being a National Guard Soldier: college tuition payments, loan repayments, dental insurance, life insurance and medical insurance.

"Just having those benefits right now, those are a lot of pluses," she said. "I don't see why you'd get out at a time like this, when people don't have jobs."

Active duty and Reserve Soldiers col-

lected re-enlistment benefits as well.

Four active-duty Soldiers with the 597th Ordnance Company, with TF 38, re-enlisted while on their deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. One of those four was Sgt. Demetrius Scott, a supply sergeant with the 597th and a Gadsden, Ala., native.

"First of all I re-enlisted because one: with the jobs and economy in the real world it was better, for me and my family, to stay in the military," said Scott. "Two: I played sports in high school and, with the military, there's that team aspect too. It just works for me."

Scott, who has been in the Army for nine years, signed up for six more years. As an active-duty Soldier, his deployment bonus was \$8,000.

Staff Sgt. John Brattain, a D Company, 1st Battalion, 137th Aviation Regiment technical inspector and a LaPorte, Ind., native, re-enlisted for future benefits and possible advancement, he said. He has served more than 20 years in the military and he signed up for six more.

"I wanted to have longevity," said Brattain,

He said he plans to submit his packet for warrant officer candidate school when he returns from his deployment.

Brattain's re-enlistment ceremony took place on an aircraft shelter here. He said he had fond memories of that event, officiated by his friend and fellow Soldier, Chief Warrant Officer Bill



Indiana National Guard Col. David Wood, Task Force 38 commander (left), re-enlists Sgt. 1st Class Jorge Camara-Falu, 597th Ordnance Detachment noncommissioned officer in charge, Oct. 5 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Leonard, Task Force 38's material manager.

"It made it feel like I was really here, in Iraq, and part of something special," said Brattain. "You could see the whole base up there; it's surreal."

Sgt. 1st Class Jorge Camara-Falu, the 597th's noncommissioned officer-in-charge and a Carolina, Puerto Rico, native, said he had a memorable re-enlistment ceremony as well.

"I was thinking for this event I might as well have somebody senior to re-enlist me," he said. "Since my home-station brigade commander isn't here, I decided on (TF 38 Commander) Col. (David) Wood.

"It's really the first time I got re-enlisted by a senior officer. He's a nice person. It's good to have a full bird ... not too many Soldiers have an O-6 re-enlist them."

## Security Soldiers protect key leaders throughout Iraq

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SPC. LISA A. COPE  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION ADDER, Iraq – The Personal Security Detachment with the 36th Sustainment Brigade out of Temple, Texas, keeps Soldiers safe while conducting operations outside the wire.

First Lt. Jose A. Alvarez, the officer in charge of the 36th Sust. Bde. PSD and a San Antonio, Texas, native, said the PSD handles a variety of missions.

"The main mission of the PSD is to provide transportation and security to our brigade sergeant major and our brigade commander on battlefield circulations, on (civil-military operations) missions – any missions that they see fit," said Alvarez.

Spc. Christian B. Luckett, a gunner with the PSD and a Dallas native, said preparation is a vital part of any mission.

The equipment, including vehicles and weapons, has to be cleaned, inspected and serviced before each mission, he said.

Alvarez said the unit had some problems on its first mission, including two vehicle break downs and lost communications, but they worked as a team to overcome the obstacles and get back safely.

"With all the stuff that has happened to us on the road ... we relied on each other; that has made us stronger," he said. "Personalities collided at the beginning but, at the end, we knew we had to work together to accomplish our mission and to come back home safely."

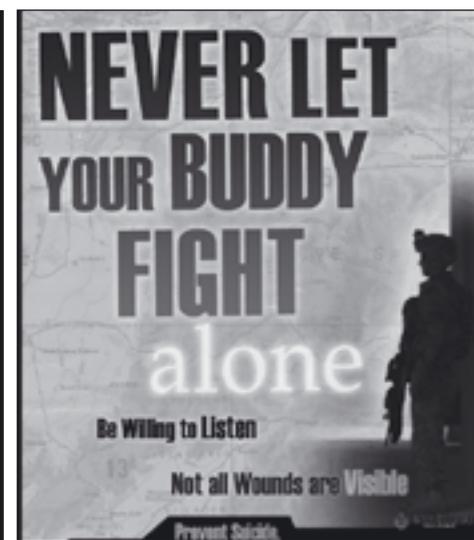
Sgt. Rodolfo M. Almandarez Jr., B Team leader with the PSD and a San Antonio native, said teamwork is an important part of how the PSD operates and the unit has been training to improve its cohesion since mobilization.

He said he believes the training has been effective so far.

"I think it is going well, overall ... we are starting to become a better team," he said.



Staff Sgt. McArthur W. Jones Jr., non-commissioned officer in charge of the Personal Security Detachment, with the 36th Sustainment Brigade out of Temple, Texas, and a Fort Worth, Texas, native, posts security Nov. 19. during a key leader engagement.



# Sudoku

The objective is to fill the 9x9 grid so each column, each row and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the digits from 1 to 9 only one time each.

Last week's answers

2	7	9	3	1	6	8	5	4
3	8	5	2	7	4	6	1	9
1	4	6	8	5	9	2	3	7
7	2	4	5	9	1	3	8	6
9	3	8	7	6	2	1	4	5
6	5	1	4	3	8	9	7	2
5	9	2	1	8	7	4	6	3
8	6	3	9	4	5	7	2	1
4	1	7	6	2	3	5	9	8

Level: Hard

1	2					6		9
3				6				1
			8	1		3		
	3		5			8		
8	2					7		5
		5			1		2	
		3		7	6			
2				9				8
9	1						7	6

# TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. What U.S. athlete was "about a week" pregnant when she broke the world 200-meter record at the 1984 Olympics?
2. What U.S. team did 59 percent of American viewers root against during the 1996 Olympics, according to an ESPN poll?
3. What sport is played with stones and brooms?
4. What contest of team strength was an official Olympic event from 1900 to 1920?
5. What was the only thing Brianna Scurry wore during her Gold Medal celebration lap through the late night streets of Atlanta?

1. Evelyn Ashford 2. The Dream Team 3. Curling 4. Tug of War 5. Her gold medal

## JB BALAD WORSHIP SERVICES

### TRADITIONAL - Sunday

0200 Air Force Hospital Chapel 0930 Provider Chapel  
 1030 Freedom Chapel (West side) 1100 Castle Heights (Bldg. 7562)  
 1400 Air Force Hospital Chapel 1730 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)  
 2000 Air Force Hospital Chapel

### GOSPEL - Sunday

1100 MWR East Building 1200 Freedom Chapel (West Side)  
 1230 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

### CONTEMPORARY - Sunday

0900 Chapel- Next Iraq/MWR East  
 1030 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)  
 1400 Castle Heights (Bldg. 7562) 1900 Freedom Chapel (West Side)

### Wednesday

2000 Gilbert Memorial Chapel

### LITURGICAL (Episcopal, Anglican, Presbyterian) - Sunday

1700 Provider Chapel

### SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST - Saturday

1000 Provider Chapel

### CHURCH OF CHRIST - Sunday

1530 Castle Heights (Bldg. 7562)

### LATTER DAY SAINTS (MORMON) - Sunday

1300 Provider Chapel 1530 Freedom Chapel (West side)  
 1900 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

### MASS - Saturday

1700 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)  
 2000 Freedom Chapel (West Side)

### Sunday

0830 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

### Thursday

1100 Air Force Hospital

### Mon., Wed., Fri.

1700 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

### Monday-Friday

1130 555th Engineer Bde. (Bldg. 7200)

### JEWISH SHABBAT SERVICES- Friday

1700 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)  
 Saturday 0930 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

### ISLAMIC PRAYER - Friday

1700 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)  
 1230 Provider Chapel

### PAGAN/WICCAN FELLOWSHIP - Thursday

1900 The Shack  
 Saturday 1900 The Shack

### GREEK ORTHODOX - Sunday

0900 Provider Annex  
**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CALL:**

Gilbert Chapel: 443-7703

Provider Chapel: 433-2430

Freedom Chapel: 443-6303

## JB BALAD ACTIVITIES

<b>INDOOR POOL</b> Swim Lessons: Mon., Wed., - 6 p.m. Tue., Thu., Sat., - 6:30 p.m. Aqua Training: Tue., Thu., - 7:30 p.m., 8:30 p.m.	a.m., 5-6 p.m. Edge Weapons & Stick Fighting Combative Training: Tue., Thur., Sat., - 8-10 p.m.	p.m. Caribbean Night: Friday- 8 p.m. Chess & Dominoes Tourney: Friday- 8 p.m. Salsa Class: Saturday- 8:30 p.m. Poker: Saturday- 7:30 p.m.	CC Cross Fit: Monday- Saturday- 10:30 p.m. Cross Fit: Mon., Wed., Fri., - 5:45 a.m., 7 a.m., 3 p.m., 6 p.m. Tue., Thu., - 7 a.m., 3 p.m.	Hold'em: Mon., Fri., - 2 p.m., 8:30 p.m. 8-ball tourney: Tuesday- 2 a.m., 8:30 p.m. Ping-pong tourney: Tuesday- 8:30 p.m. Spades: Wednesday- 2 a.m., 8:30 p.m. Salsa: Wednesday- 8:30 p.m. 9-ball: Thursday- 2 a.m., 8:30 p.m. Karaoke: Thursday- 8:30 p.m. Yoga: Wednesday- 8 p.m. MACP Level 1: Friday- 8 p.m. 5 on 5 Basketball: Saturday- 8 p.m.	Ping-pong tourney: Tuesday- 8 p.m. Foosball tourney: Tuesday- 8 p.m. Jam Session: Tuesday- 7:30 p.m. 8-ball tourney: Wednesday- 8 p.m. Guitar Lessons: Thursday- 7:30 p.m. Game tourney: Thursday- 1 p.m., 8 p.m. Enlisted Poker: Friday- 1 p.m., 8 p.m. Officer Poker: Saturday- 1 p.m., 8 p.m. Squat Competition: Saturday- 8 p.m. Darts: Saturday- 8:30 p.m.	Friday- 7 p.m. Aerobics: Monday, Wednesday, Friday- 7 p.m. Body by Midget Toning Class: Tue., Thu., - 7 p.m. Dodge ball Game: Tuesday- 7:30 p.m. Furman's Martial Arts: Mon., Wed., Sun., - 1 p.m. Gaston's Self-Defense Class: Fri., Sat., - 7 p.m. Open court basketball: Thursday- 7 p.m. Open court soccer: Mon., Wed., - 7 p.m. Zingano Brazilian Jui Jitsu: Tue., Thu., - 8:30 p.m.
<b>EAST FIT-NESS CENTER</b> Open Court Volleyball: Sunday- 6 p.m. Aerobics: Mon., Wed., Fri., - 5:30-6:30 a.m. Yoga Class: Mon., Fri., - 6-7 a.m. Step Aerobics: Mon., Wed., Fri., - 5:30 p.m. Conditioning Training Class: Mon., Wed., Fri., - 7:15-8 p.m. Brazilian Jui-Jitsu: Mon., Wed., Fri., - 8-9 p.m. Abs-Aerobics: Tue., Thu., 6-7	<b>EAST REC-REATION CENTER</b> 4-ball tourney: Sunday- 8 p.m. 8-ball tourney: Monday- 8 p.m. Karaoke: Sunday- 8 p.m. Aerobics: Monday- 8 p.m. Swing Class: Tuesday- 8 p.m. Table Tennis: Tuesday- 8 p.m. Plastic Models Club: Wednesday 7 p.m. 9-ball tourney: Wednesday- 8 p.m. Dungeons & Dragons: Thursday- 7:30 p.m. Poetry Night: Thursday- 8 p.m. 6-ball tourney: Thursday- 8	<b>H6 FITNESS CENTER</b> Spin: Sunday- 9 a.m. Monday, Wed., Fri., - 2 a.m., 8 a.m. 2 p.m., 7 p.m., 9 p.m. Tue., Thu., - 5:45 a.m., 9 a.m., 8:30 p.m. Saturday- 9 a.m., 7 p.m. Boxing: Sunday- 4 p.m. Tue., Thu., - 2 p.m. Boot Camp: Sunday- 8:45 a.m. Tue., Thu., - 7 p.m. Power Abs: Mon., Tue., Thu., - 8 p.m. Friday- 9 p.m.	<b>H6 RECREATION CENTER</b> Bingo: Sunday- 8 p.m. Texas	<b>WEST REC-REATION CENTER</b> Green Bean Karaoke: Sun., Wed., 7:30pm 9-ball tourney: Monday- 8 p.m.	<b>WEST FIT-NESS CENTER</b> 3 on 3 basketball tourney: Saturday- 7:30 p.m. 6 on 6 volleyball tourney: Friday, - 8-10 p.m.	<b>CIRCUIT GYM</b> Floor hockey: Mon., Wed., Fri., - 8-10 p.m.

## UPCOMING SPORTS ON AFN



### Thursday 11/26/09

NBA Wednesday: Miami Heat @ Orlando Magic, Live 3:30 a.m. AFN/sports  
 NHL on VERSUS: St. Louis Blues @ Dallas Stars, Live 4 a.m. AFN/xtra  
 Chicago Blackhawks @ San Jose Sharks, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN/xtra

### Friday 11/27/09

Thanksgiving Classics: Oakland Raiders @ Dallas Cowboys, Live 12 a.m. AFN/sports  
 Thanksgiving Classic - Thursday Night Football: New York Giants @ Denver Broncos, Live 4 a.m. AFN/sports  
 ESPN College Football Primetime: Texas @ Texas A&M, Live 4 a.m. AFN/xtra  
 NBA on TNT: Chicago Bulls @ Utah Jazz (JIP), Live 7 a.m. AFN/xtra

### Saturday 11/28/09

ESPN2 College Football Primetime: Pittsburgh @ West Virginia, Live 3 a.m. AFN/sports  
 NBA Friday: Washington Wizards @ Miami Heat, Live 3 a.m. AFN/xtra  
 NBA Friday: Phoenix Suns @ Minnesota Timberwolves, Live 5:30 a.m. AFN/xtra

### Sunday 11/29/09

Chicago Blackhawks @ Los Angeles Kings (JIP), Live 7 a.m. AFN/xtra  
 The Bayou Classic: Grambling vs Southern (Louisiana Superdome, New Orleans, LA), Tape Delayed 11 a.m. AFN/xtra  
 HBO Boxing After Dark: Lucian Bute vs Librado Andrade (Colisee Pepsi; Quebec City, QC, Canada), Tape Delayed 3 p.m. AFN/xtra

### Monday 11/30/09

Houston Rockets @ Oklahoma City Thunder, Live 3 a.m. AFN/xtra  
 OMEGA Mission Hills World Cup: Final Round (Mission Hills GC; Olazabal, China), Tape Delayed 3 a.m. AFN/prime atlantic  
 Pittsburgh Steelers @ Baltimore Ravens, Live 4:15 a.m. AFN/sports  
 New Jersey Nets @ Los Angeles Lakers, Live 5:30 a.m. AFN/xtra

### Tuesday 12/01/09

NHL on VERSUS: Buffalo Sabres @ Toronto Maple Leafs, Live 3 a.m. AFN/xtra  
 Monday Night Football: New England Patriots @ New Orleans Saints, Live 4:30 a.m. AFN/sports  
 NBA on NBATV: Indiana Pacers @ Golden State Warriors, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN/xtra

### Wednesday 12/02/09

2009 Big Ten/ACC Challenge: Wake Forest @ Purdue, Live 3 a.m. AFN/sports  
 NHL on VERSUS: Columbus Blue Jackets @ Chicago Blackhawks, Live 4 a.m. AFN/xtra  
 2009 Big Ten/ACC Challenge: Michigan State @ North Carolina, Live 5 a.m. AFN/sports

# Arts & Entertainment

## 'The Invention of Lying': cute religious satire

BY STAFF SGT. JOEL F. GIBSON  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



**T**he "Invention of Lying" is incredibly funny at times albeit the plot feels a bit disjointed and anecdotal.

The setting of the film, an alternate earth wherein humans are incapable of making false statements to the point where it has never occurred to anyone that someone else could tell a lie, sets the scene for some really amusing comments, advertisements

and misunderstandings.

An aspect of the film that was underplayed in trailers was religious satire. In a world where people can only make observations on things that can only be taken at face value, there is no room for faith, so the population has no understanding of that concept.

When the main character Mark Bellison, played by Ricky Gervais, is unable to pay his rent, he utters the world's first lie by telling a bank teller he has more money in his account than is accurate.

The idea that he could be lying nev-

er occurs to the teller, who chalks up the incongruity to a bank error and immediately gives him the amount requested. Discovering the power of lying, Bellison sets out to create his life as he has always wanted it and founds a religion based on heavenly rewards and common sense values.

The absolute best parts of this movie are the little details. When Bellison visits his mother at a nursing home, the sign on the building reads, "A sad place for hopeless old people," and during a scene on a busy street, a bus drives through the shot with an advertisement proclaiming,

"Pepsi, when they don't have Coke."

The film had a decent number of cameos by major actors, including Edward Norton as an abusive, cocaine addicted police officer who readily admits these faults to a suspected drunk driver and Philip Seymour Hoffman as a grizzly bartender.

Overall, I'm glad I watched "The Invention of Lying," because it was a good way to spend an afternoon and the concept was, in a word, cute. I don't think the movie has any sort of re-watch-ability, though that could change with time. I rate the film a solid six out of 10.

## Making cycling interesting to read about

BY SPC. NAVEED ALI SHAH  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



**I** don't even like cycling, but after reading an article about Lance Armstrong's training intensity, I

went to the library looking for a book about the seven time Tour de France winner.

The book I found in the H-6 Library, John Wilcockson's "23 Days in July," was a bit outdated, but, with no other options, I took it anyway.

I'm glad I did.

What I found was an outstanding day by day account of Armstrong's sixth Tour de France victory, interlaced with cycling background, history and the competitor's pre-race training regimen.

Wilcockson provides a thorough background for those whose knowledge of the Tour De France is - "It's a tour ... of France ... on a bike ..."

What stands out about "23 Days in July" is Wilcockson's historical insight into the Tour de France. He has covered the tour for more than 50 years; since 1968.

The Tour de France takes place in three weeks and two days every July, across more than 2,100 miles of grueling mountain terrain, old European cobblestone streets, and modern blacktop.

The race is considered by some to be the most difficult sports event in the world. The race was in its 91st year (with breaks for the World Wars) in 2004 when five-time champion Lance Armstrong set out to achieve what no other cyclist in the history of the race had ever done: win six in a row.

"Becoming an athlete was the best passport to prosperity for a child in German Democratic Republic, so (Jan) Ullrich became a part of the country's elite sports program. He started at an age when Lance Armstrong was still tooling around Richardson, Texas..."

wrote Wilcockson, describing the 2003 runner-up.

Ullrich was considered the man to beat for Armstrong to be top dog for the sixth time and Ullrich knew it. Ullrich overcame injuries, alcoholism and drug use, so, by 2004, he was poised to defeat Armstrong and claim his second tour victory. Behind Ullrich was Tyler Hamilton, an unrelenting American who was once on Armstrong's own team.

Hamilton's training intensity was rivaled only by Armstrong's.

"And in the pre-race list of favorites published by the influential L'Equipe newspaper, Hamilton was given the same four star rating as Ullrich, behind the five stars given to Armstrong," wrote Wilcockson.

This is the type of insight decades of experience on the European cycling circuit provides..

Wilcockson described a particularly gnarly course across the Netherlands, Belgium and France, "The weather

worsened on the seventh day, when the rain fell with Niagra-like force on the dolomitic (sic) peaks of the Jura Mountains."

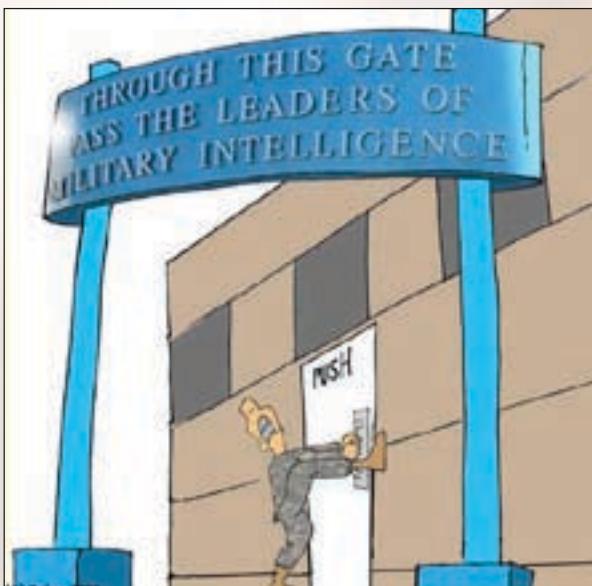
The tension of the race itself was palpable, as Wilcockson described watching the leaders come in.

"Swopping from a rocky plateau of tall, dark pines, the two racers begin their dramatic descent. Down, down, down they go. No need to brake. Picking up speed. No need to steer. Their bikes glide instinctively through each swishing turn after turn after turn ... left, right, left ... ever faster ... ever deeper into this land of crystalline and granite bedrock."

This is really an enchanting tale of glory and defeat, beginnings and finales, and everything in between.

Whether you're a cycle enthusiast or not, pick up "23 Days in July" and you won't be able to put it down, even though you already know who wins.

## PVT MURPHY



### Sustainer Reel Time Theater

#### Wednesday, Dec. 2

5 p.m. Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs  
8 p.m. Pandorum

#### Thursday, Dec. 3

5 p.m. Planet 51  
8 p.m. Twilight: New Moon

#### Friday, Dec. 4

2 p.m. Where The Wild Things Are  
5 p.m. Old Dogs  
8:30 p.m. The Blind Side

#### Saturday, Dec. 5

2 p.m. Old Dogs  
5p.m. The Blind Side  
8 p.m. Cirque Du Freak: Vampire's Asst

#### Sunday, Dec. 6

2 p.m. The Blind Side  
5 p.m. The Step Father  
8 p.m. Old Dogs

#### Monday, Dec. 7

5 p.m. Cirque Du Freak: Vampire's Asst  
8 p.m. The Blind Side

#### Tuesday, Dec. 8

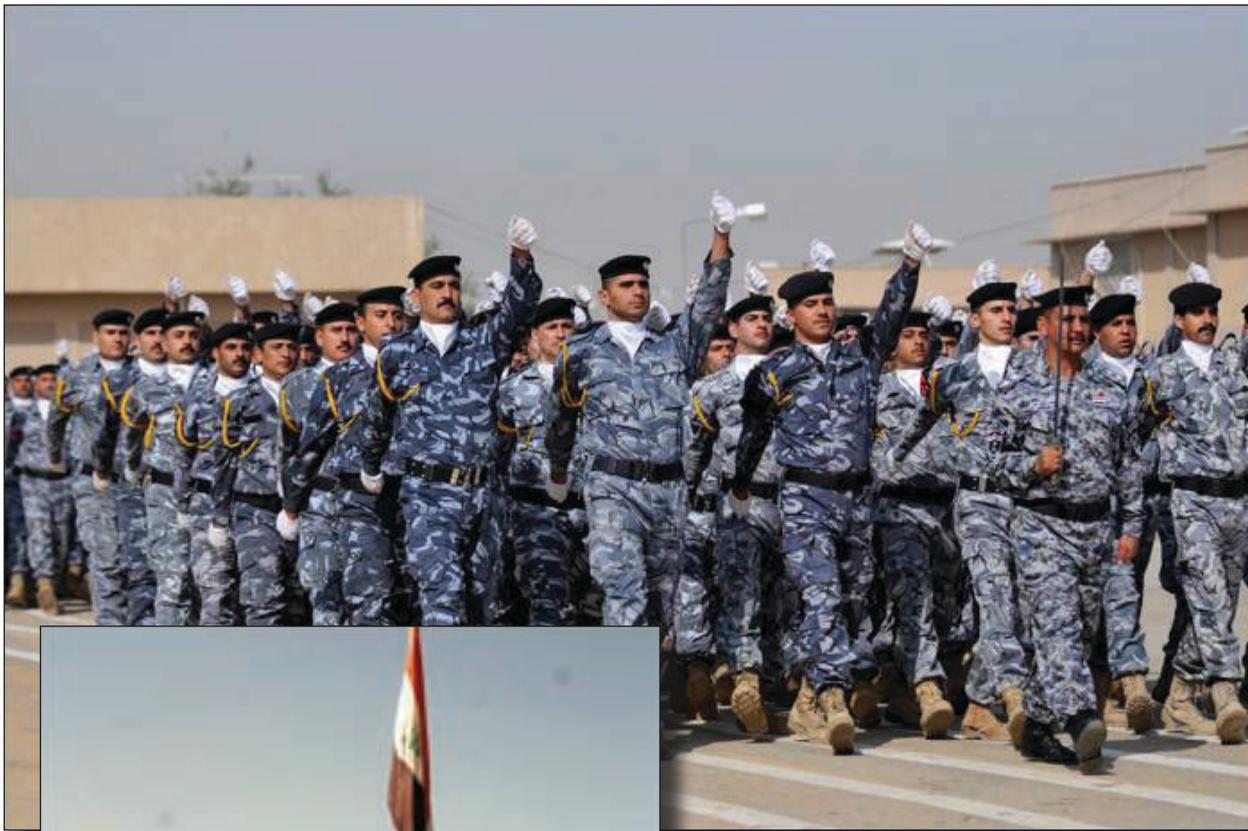
5 p.m. Where The Wild Things Are  
8 p.m. Old Dogs

#### Wednesday, Dec. 9

5 p.m. Cirque Du Freak: Vampire's Asst  
8 p.m. The Step Father



# PHOTOS AROUND IRAQ



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Edwin L. Wriston

Iraqi Police officers participate in graduation ceremonies Nov. 9 at the Baghdad Police College, near Baghdad, Iraq. The graduation marked the historic first ever class of female officers to graduate from the rigorous nine-month officer training course, and was attended by Iraq Minister of the Interior, Jawad Bolani, U.S. Ambassador Patricia Haslach, and Danish Ambassador Mikael Winther among others.

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel St. Pierre



Soldiers with the 1st Iraqi Army and U.S. 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, shield themselves from sand and rocks kicked up by CH-53 Sea Stallions during a static loading exercise Nov. 15 at Camp Ramadi, in western Iraq. Members of the U.S. Army, Marine Corps, and Iraqi Army train together loading and unloading on Sea Stallions to prepare for upcoming missions.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Anderson Savoy

Elementary school students cheer to show their gratitude for the school supplies they received from local Iraq Police officers and U.S. Soldiers assigned to the 218th Military Police Company Nov. 11, in Tarqalan, Iraq.



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Ali Hargis

Students gather in the school's main lobby to say thank you to Iraqi Federal Police officers and U.S. Soldiers, with the 1st Battalion, 1st Mosul Brigade, 3rd Federal Police Division Transition Team, after receiving more than 150 backpacks, during a joint humanitarian-aid mission Nov. 11, at Al Shuhada School for Girls, in western Mosul, Iraq.



U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Brien Vorhees

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jennifer Neve, a member of the Wasit Provincial Reconstruction Team, is greeted Nov. 13 at the Professional Teachers Training Center in Kut, Iraq. The meeting was to coordinate an upcoming Women of Substance forum for young women in Kut.

# NEWS AROUND IRAQ

## Judges get first-hand look at forensics evidence lab

BAGHDAD – Judges and prosecutors from the Ministry of Interior cassation court and the Ministry of Defense court toured the Baghdad Police College forensics lab Nov. 19 in Baghdad.

This visit, coordinated through the Iraq Training and Advisory Mission – Rule of Law directorate, showcased the capabilities of the forensics lab to the judges and prosecutors. The purpose was to educate them on new evidence collection and analysis techniques.

The judges and prosecutors received vital information that will assist in the judges making decisions in their court rooms based on evidence instead of confessions.

The High Institute forensics lab demonstrated to the judges each of the main disciplines, including DNA analysis, advanced firearms microscopy, fingerprint analysis and document analysis. The judges spoke with the lab technicians and provided real-world examples of what types of criminal cases they face.

An MoI judge said, after viewing the lab and seeing the level of professionalism the lab staff and officers of the High Institute demonstrated, he was “very proud” of the important work the MoI does in this field. He said he understands for Iraq to move forward in the area of justice and rule of law, the forensics capability of Iraq will play a large part of that success.

This was the first time judges have visited the forensics lab at the BPC.

The ITAM – Rule of Law directorate works hand in hand with Iraqi judges, prosecutors, law-makers, defense attorneys and others involved in professionalizing the Iraqi court systems and judicial processes.

## Kirkush Infantry Officer Basic Course graduates third class

KIRKUSH, Iraq – Three hundred seventy-eight students graduated as cycle 15 of the Infantry Officer Basic Course at the Kirkush Military Training Base Nov. 15 at Kirkush, Iraq.

The six-week IOBC course, which prepares officers to lead at the platoon level, is an indication of the Iraqi Army’s continued efforts to train and develop military leaders and professionalize its forces.

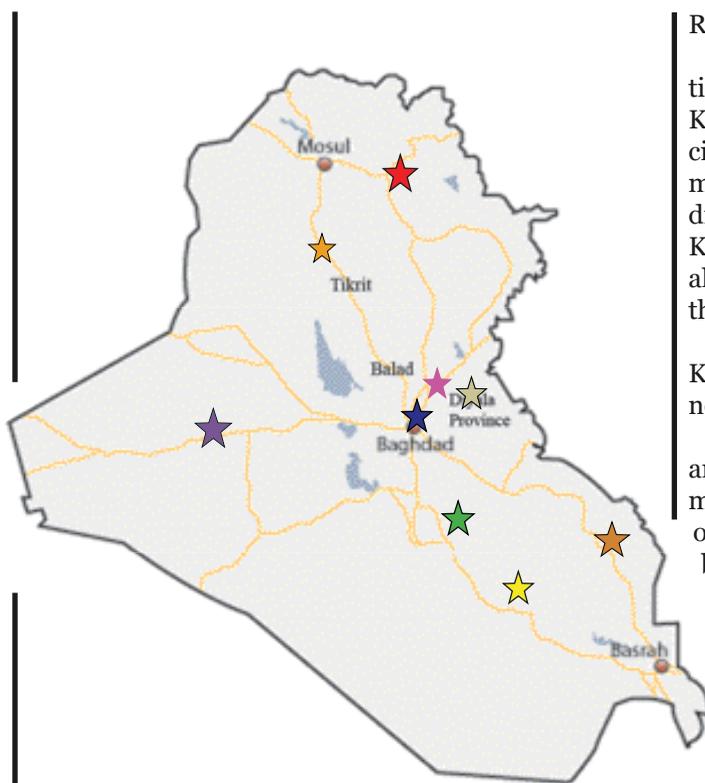
The IOBC curriculum covered all aspects of small-unit leadership and tactical skills.

The culminating event for this course was a mounted combat patrol live-fire exercise. The students were divided into eight platoons and rotated through various training scenarios.

At the graduation ceremony, Iraqi Maj. Ahmed Hashim Lafta was recognized as the top student and spoke at the ceremony.

“Now I will take my newly learned skills back to my unit and continue training future leaders of our army,” Lafta said.

Two other Soldiers were also recognized as honor students.



Staff Lt. Gen. Hussain, deputy chief of staff for training, was the principal speaker at the graduation ceremony. He challenged the IOBC graduates to be effective leaders and to earn the respect of those in their platoons and to take care of their Soldiers. He spoke highly of noncommissioned officers and said the platoon leaders need to respect and train NCOs well. He told everyone to remember they represent Iraq and the Iraqi Army.

Other speakers included Staff Maj. Gen. Samir, tactical training director, and Staff Col. Mahamood, infantry school commander.

These Soldiers will now return to their units and continue with their efforts for stabilizing the security of Iraq.

## Engineers tackle Kirkuk road projects

KIRKUK, Iraq – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region District, Kirkuk Resident Office is delving into the road construction business.

The Kirkuk office is serving as construction design manager for the Kirkuk Ring Road project and the manager of Village to Market road repair project.

The \$130 million, two-year Kirkuk Ring Road project is a 31-kilometer highway extension, designed to create a southern access bypass road from the Sulamaniya Interchange to the Taza Road Interchange.

The three-phase project is funded by oil revenues from the provincial government.

USACE, through the Economic Support Fund, provided \$4.3 million for the engineering design of the new roadway.

The design also includes the construction of five highway interchanges and four bridges on the six-lane road. The project also includes the construction of culverts for gas pipelines and future utility easements, a right-of-way fence, and landscaping of the median strips and ramps.

Lt. Col. Edgar Montalvo, Department of State Project Reconstruction Transition Team liaison, said the

Ring Road is a significant step for the city of Kirkuk.

“This project is one of Iraq’s largest transportation projects and allows travelers navigating through Kirkuk from the north, east and south to bypass the city’s center,” Montalvo said. “It will have an enormous impact on relieving traffic congestion by redirecting automobile and truck traffic from using Kirkuk’s downtown streets, with the end result of allowing essential mobile services unfettered travel through the downtown district.”

Lt. Col. Anthony Jocius, a project manager in the Kirkuk Resident Office, said success of the project denotes a long-term positive step for local residents.

“This project is a major collaboration of both Arab and Kurdish people living in a governorate for the most part in harmony,” Jocius said. “It’s this type of project that brings people together for a common benefit.”

With the backing of the Project Reconstruction Team, the Kirkuk office is also managing the resurfacing of more than 81 kilometers of roads in 17 locations in northeastern Iraq under the Village to Market road repair project.

The \$2.76 million project, funded through the Commander’s Emergency Relief Fund, is designed to provide a network of improved rural roadways to give residents access to local and regional markets, according to engineers.

By enhancing roadways, planners believe the easier access to rural areas will bolster local markets and stimulate commerce among other villages, thus fostering agricultural and economic growth within the province.

The reconditioned roads are also designed to improve access to the villages by emergency response teams.

The project is divided into six contracts and calls for hard-packed gravel resurfacing of the roads.

## Iraqi Army divisions conduct mortar training

KIRKUK, Iraq – The 2nd and 3rd Iraqi Army Divisions are professionalizing their forces with 81mm mortar training at the Kirkuk Training Center in November.

The divisions have been training since Nov. 1.

The 81mm mortar operation requires proficiency and teamwork, said Iraqi Maj. Mohammed, the regional training center weapon wing commander.

This program instructs Iraqi Soldiers to engage targets by “direct lay,” in which a gunner identifies a target and adjusts fire incrementally onto the target.

“The training prepares Soldiers to work collectively with forward observers and the fire direction center, when the gunner cannot see the target,” Mohammed said.

This indirect fire process requires that all the Soldiers on the mortar team have knowledge on multiple military disciplines including target identification, map reading, navigation and math skills. These students also successfully completed literacy and mathematics exams, a land navigation and terrain association course, as well as map reading.

“As a prerequisite for course completion, the Soldiers will be required to successfully complete a writ-

ten examination and participate in live-fire practical exercises," Mohammed said.

The mortar training concluded Nov. 28.

## Maysan Police Training Center develops newly promoted officers

 MAYSAN, Iraq – Two hundred fifty newly promoted sergeants and commissioners from the Iraqi Police Service in Maysan Province completed a week-long officer promotion special development course Nov. 18 at Maysan.

The promotional course consisted of instruction and performance-based learning in areas of team building, providing positive reinforcement, effective delegation, motivation, police leadership styles, and morale and esprit de corps. The course was taught by a staff of Ministry of Interior-certified trainers.

This course is one of multiple, specialized and advanced training courses offered at the MPTC. The center is expanding its capacity and capability in providing enhanced, modern and democratic policing courses to the cadre of more than 13,000 Iraqi police service members throughout the Maysan Province.

## Shaiba Training Center combines noncommissioned officer graduations

 SHAIBA, Iraq – Shaiba Training Center noncommissioned officer courses graduated 15 Iraqi Soldiers from the platoon sergeant course and 31 Soldiers from the corporal course Nov. 14 at Shaiba.

NCOs, often called the backbone of the Army, are the primary leaders responsible for training and leading junior enlisted Soldiers.

The culminating event for these courses was a live-fire training exercise at the close-quarters marksmanship training area in which students were required to navigate the course with an M16 rifle.

Soldiers also received training on the identification of mines, defense of protective belts, ambush and patrolling techniques.

At the combined graduation ceremony, the Soldiers were recognized and congratulated by, Iraqi Lt. Col. Mahmood, training center commander.

These Soldiers will return to their units to continue their efforts to promote a safe and secure Iraq.

## Tallil Training Center opens high-tech computer lab

 CAMP UR, Iraq – The Tallil Regional Training Center at Camp Ur established a high-speed network Nov. 15.

Its 12 networked computers will be used by Iraqi Soldiers to conduct administrative tasks at the RTC.

Iraqi Staff Brig. Gen. Arif initiated the process to obtain the computer lab after identifying deficiencies in RTC administrative tasks.

The new network allows computer users to share professional files with colleagues as well as manage personal files with password protection.

Arif, who led the ribbon cutting ceremony marking the opening of the lab, challenged the RTC staff members to continue to increase their technological skills.

He said the center intends to offer additional computer training for the staff on a regular basis.

This Iraqi-led project was supported primarily by two U.S. Army advisers: Sgt. 1st Class David Osborne, with Iraq Training Advisory Mission – Army, Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq, and Sgt. Christopher Mercer, communications sergeant with the 4th Brigade, 1st Armored Division.

Mercer created the server using open source, publicly available software.

## Fuel Quality Assurance Course graduates 8 students

 TAJI, Iraq – Eight Iraqi Army students graduated from the Iraqi Air Force Fuel Quality Assurance Course Nov. 12.

This is the first course that trains Iraqi Army Soldiers to field-test fuel quality.

The course teaches the Iraqi Army to detect deficiencies in both ground and aviation grade fuels. This is a fundamental capability in a modern force that fields advanced weapon systems, such as the M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank.

The Iraqi Army intends to have fuel quality assurance trained personnel in all of its location commands before the arrival of equipment and vehicles.

At the graduation ceremony, Iraqi Maj. Gen. Kasim, the director of Transportation and Provisioning, congratulated the students – the first Soldiers to go through the training. The next course, which will include a combination of Iraqi Army and Air Force personnel, is scheduled in December 2009.

## Two suspected terrorists detained in West Rashid

 BAGHDAD – Iraqi Security Forces and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers detained two individuals suspected of aiding terrorists during a joint raid early Nov. 23.

At roughly 2 a.m., Soldiers with the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, in conjunction with Iraqi Police and Iraqi Federal Police, detained two suspects, in the West Rashid district of Baghdad, believed to be involved in kidnapping, counterfeiting used in funding terrorist cells in the Baghdad area, and murder.

One suspect was arrested based on an Iraqi warrant and the second after the joint patrol discovered evidence linking him to the first suspect.

Both individuals were transported to a nearby headquarters for further questioning.

## Alleged extremist leader arrested in Baghdad

 BAGHDAD – Elements of the Emergency Response Brigade, advised by U.S. forces, arrested a suspected terrorist leader linked to terrorist groups Nov. 16 in Baghdad.

The alleged terrorist was arrested with a warrant issued by the Criminal Investi-

gative Court of Al-Kharkh.

The terrorist is suspected of leading extremist groups believed to be responsible for murders, weapons smuggling, kidnapping and using explosively formed penetrators against Iraqi Security Forces. EFPs are specialized forms of roadside bombs that direct a blast of molten metal at their targets.

The ERB entered the residence and positively identified the suspect after securing the house. Constables collected evidence from the house after the arrest.

## Four suspected al-Qaeda terrorists arrested

 AL ANBAR PROVINCE, Iraq – The Iraqi Special Operations Forces, with U.S. forces advisers, arrested four alleged al-Qaeda cell members Nov. 11.

The arrests were based on warrants issued by the Republic of Iraq Higher Judicial Council Magistrate Court.

The suspected terrorists are alleged to have murdered and extorted Iraqis in al Anbar province. They are also suspected of attempts at disrupting the stability of the Iraqi government before the upcoming elections.

The arrests were made without incident.

## Iraqi Police arrest one in search

 BAYJI, Iraq – Iraqi Police arrested an individual Nov. 24 during a joint security operation in Bayji, southwest of Kirkuk, Iraq, during their search for a member of an al-Qaeda in Iraq-sponsored improvised explosive device cell.

Iraqi Police and U.S. advisers searched a building for the warranted individual who is believed to work with other AQI cell members who carry out attacks throughout the region.

Based on preliminary questioning and evidence found at the scene, Iraqi Police arrested a suspected accomplice of the warranted individual without incident.

## Suspects arrested in southern Baghdad

 BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers and Iraqi Security Forces detained nine individuals based on warrants for their arrest, early Nov. 19.

At roughly 2:00 a.m., U.S. troops with the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team and Iraqi Soldiers from the 17th Iraqi Army Division arrested the suspects during a combined operation in al-Buaytha, in southern Baghdad.

The operation targeted an organization allegedly involved in multiple murders, the movement of weapons and improvised explosive device materials, as well as the intimidation of local nationals in the area.

ISF transported the detainees to a nearby headquarters for questioning without incident.

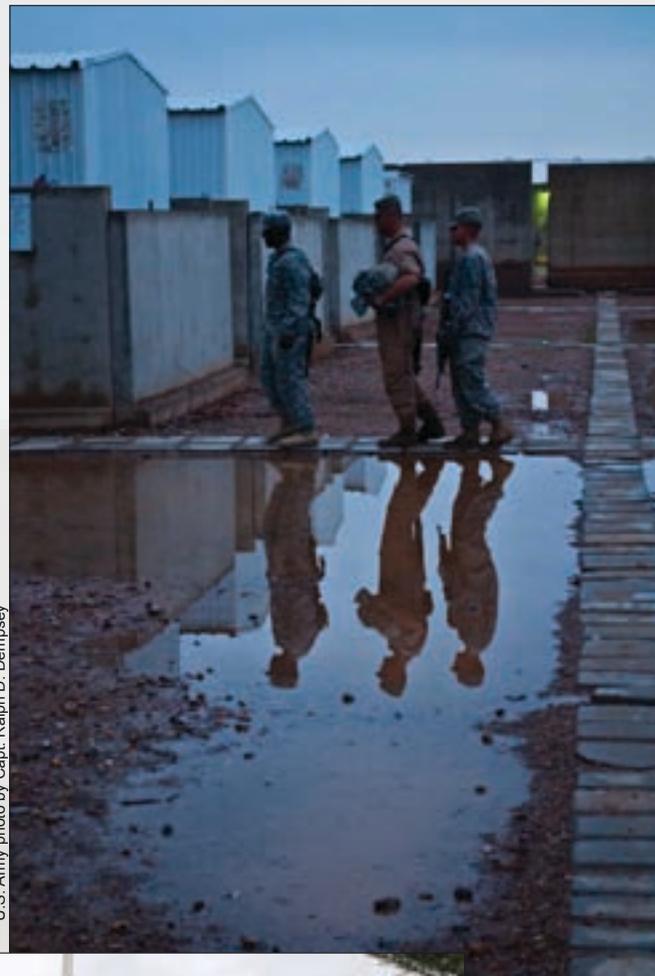
# Phantom Support



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Lisa A. Cope

A woman and her two children walk down a road near Al Soonabar School Nov. 18, in Jaber Mohamed Village, Iraq.

Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Campbell, Sgt. James Kirk and Spc. William Edwards, all from the 910th Quarter Master Company, walk back to their CHU after the rain storm Nov. 17 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Later in the evening Joint Base Balad received 2 inches of rain in 45 minutes.



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Ralph D. Dempsey

Sgt. 1st Class Randolph Ellerbe, a support operations noncommissioned officer in charge with the 620th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, and a St. Louis native, was presented the certificate and medallion for the Honorable Order of Saint Christopher Oct. 22 by the 620th CSSB commander, Lt. Col. Douglas Stubbe, a Webster, Wis., native.

U.S. Army photo by Chief Warrant Officer 2 James Neumann



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Vincent Cerchione

Staff Sgt. Brandon Carrington, a Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 260th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, and an Oklahoma City native, was given his oath of reenlistment into the Army by Capt. Rob McGuire, the company commander and a Canton, Mich., native. The two wore CBRN equipment during the reenlistment ceremony.



U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Erick Oberg

Pfc. Justin Long, a forklift operator for the Class I yard with the 639th Combat Sustainment Support Company, 620th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, and a Kalispell, Mont., native, loads up Unitized Group Ration-Express for an engineer unit. The UGR-E is designed to provide a hot meal for up to 18 Warfighters in bases where there is no dining facility or field kitchen.