

The Expeditionary Times

Proudly serving the finest Expeditionary service members throughout Iraq

Vol. 3 Issue 4

December 16, 2009

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

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WWE superstars, divas entertain troops at JBB

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. RYAN TWIST

EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – World Wrestling Entertainment superstars and divas filmed a holiday special entitled “WWE Tribute to the Troops,” Dec. 4 at Holt Stadium at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, to honor deployed service members.

“WWE Tribute to the Troops” is an hour-long special that will air Dec. 19 at 9 p.m. Eastern time on NBC.

“It’s awesome; it’s really our Super Bowl,” said Vince McMahon, chairman of the WWE out of Stamford, Conn. “Everyone thinks Wrestle Mania is (the big event), but it’s really not. This is our seventh year over (here) and this is the biggest thing we do all year. We just thoroughly enjoy it.”

SEE WWE ON PAGE 4



World Wrestling Entertainment superstars Chris Masters and MVP perform for the troops Dec. 4 at Holt Stadium at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. WWE superstars and divas came to Iraq to film and perform the “WWE Tribute to the Troops,” which will air Dec. 19 at 9 p.m. Eastern time.

New Iraqi Army base opens in Maysan province

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

IRAQI ARMY CAMP AL MEMONA, Iraq – A ribbon cutting ceremony Dec. 9 marked the celebration of the official opening of Iraqi Army Camp Al Memona, Iraq.

Iraqi Army Brig. Gen. Amer Abd Al-Wahid Al-Bayat, the base commander at Al Memona, gave his thanks to Coalition forces and the Iraqi Ministry of Defence at the ceremony.

“I would like to thank the ...

(Coalition forces) and also the Iraqi Ministry of Defence for their support and assistance, and their effort in the construction of the new buildings and the support of the Iraqi Army,” said Al-Bayat, through an interpreter.

Col. Sean A. Ryan, commander of the 36th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) out of Temple, Texas, attended the ribbon cutting and said he plans to send logistics trainings and advisory teams to help with the logistics and maintenance at Al Memona.

“Those teams will come in and help them set up their systems to order parts, and make

Iraqi Soldiers, Iraqi Police and Coalition forces dine together in the dining facility of the newly constructed Iraqi Army Camp Al Memona, Iraq, shortly after the ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the official opening of the new base Dec. 9.

sure that they translate all the manuals, and (know) how to issue tools – just the procedures for conducting maintenance and sustaining that maintenance,” he said.

Ryan, a Cedar Park, Texas, native, said Al Memona was designed as a logistical hub to support the Maysan area.

Air Force Lt. Col. Steven Ramsay, the senior adviser
SEE OPEN ON PAGE 4



Balad Blotter December 2 - December 9

LARCENY OF PRIVATE PROPERTY:

A complainant telephoned the Law Enforcement Desk and said property had been stolen from specified location. A patrol was briefed and dispatched to the location and made contact with the complainant. Patrol assisted the complainant in writing a sworn statement. The complainant said via Air Force form IMT 1168/Statement of Complainant Dec. 6 at roughly 12 p.m. he placed his lap top bag which contained property and school books in the shift leader's office. The complainant said he completed his shift at 8 p.m. and returned to his residence when he noticed property was missing. The complainant said the room where he left the property was secure and only accessible by military personnel.

FAILURE TO OBEY ORDER OR REGULATION:

A complainant telephoned the Law Enforcement Desk and reported subject attempted to gain access to specified location using a Common Access Card that belongs to a different military member. Patrol was briefed and responded to the location with Special Operations Consulting-Security Management Group guard who said, while checking identification cards at the dining facility, the subject presented a CAC that did not belong to him. Patrol transported the subject to the LED for further questioning. Patrol advised the subject of his rights under Article 31/Uniform Code of Military Justice via Air Force IMT 1168/Statement of Suspect for a violation of Article 92/Failure to Obey Order or Regulation and Article 134 D(1) False or Unauthorized Pass Offense. The subject acknowledged his rights, declined legal counsel and wrote a statement. The subject said, via AF IMT 1168/Statement of Suspect, at around 12:45 p.m., he and two other members from his unit decided to go to lunch. The subject said they entered dining facility one and noticed it was full, so they proceeded to dining facility four. As they arrived, the subject noticed he left his CAC in his computer. The subject said he saw fellow unit member and asked if he could use his CAC to gain entrance so he could grab lunch. The unit member complied with subject and handed his CAC to subject. The SOC guard at the entrance of dining facility four noticed the last name on the CAC did not match the last name on subject's uniform top. The subject was released on his own recognizance.

NIPR: 443-8602
SIPR: 241-1171

Email: PMOdesk@iraq.centcom.mil

Mental Health: marijuana leads abused illegal drugs

By CAPT. STEVE BRASINGTON
COMBAT STRESS CONTROL PSYCHIATRIST



“People should think twice,” said an Army specialist who was separated for drug use.

He had immigrated to the United States as a teenager with hopes to make a good life for himself. When

he joined the Army, he said he was privileged to belong to “the best Army in the world.”

He had advanced through the ranks, accumulating the points and time needed to become a non-commissioned officer.

He said he anticipated receiving a field grade promotion during his combat tour.

However, before he deployed, he went to one last party. He said he got so drunk, he did not remember smoking marijuana. Nevertheless, a urine drug test revealed that he had, in fact, smoked marijuana.

The most commonly abused illegal drug is cannabis.

When the Drug Enforcement Agency seizes drugs, suspected narcotics are sent to a forensic laboratory for identification.

Based on data maintained by the Community Epidemiology Work Group across 20 major metropolitan areas, cannabis ranked number one or two in 18 out of 20 cities that sent in narcotics for identification. In Atlanta and Minneapolis/St. Paul, where marijuana was not ranked in the top two, it was beat out by cocaine and methamphetamine.

With his unit in theater, the specialist's field grade promotion never came. Instead, his rank decreased from specialist to private and he was subsequently discharged.

His military record was flagged, preventing him from taking college courses with military assistance. He had planned to attain a college education like his wife. He said he let his wife down and he let his chain of command down.

He said he ruined his image and went from building a bright future to living his life under a cloud.

He understood that by drinking at a party where

illegal drugs were being used, he risked his career, his relationships and his future.

He returned home early, discharged from the Army for a drug violation.

He said opportunities to find a job were limited as a civilian and he would have to live with a relative to get by.

His wife was finishing graduate school in another city and staying with her relative.

He said he hoped his marriage would survive. However, he did not like that his wife had a higher education and solid career plans while he looked for temporary work.

He said he was painfully aware of the high cost of drug use. He granted permission to share his story because he said he hoped others could benefit from his experience.

He was in his early 20s.

Soldiers under age 25 are at the highest risk for alcohol and drug abuse.

Everyone knows that marijuana is popular among drug users but is it really a big deal? Does it ever make people sick enough to need medical care?

As a reason for admission to drug treatment, cannabis and cocaine ranked ahead of alcohol in cities like Detroit. Overall, marijuana abuse indicators remain high and stable across the nation.

According to the January 2009 issue of Epidemiologic Trends in Drug Abuse, published by the National Institutes of Health, treatment admissions for marijuana in New York City increased to the highest number ever reported. In Washington, a higher percentage of juvenile arrestees tested positive for marijuana than for any other drug.

Based on law enforcement arrests, emergency room visits and forensic laboratory tests of seized contraband, marijuana is a big deal. It certainly became a big deal for our Army specialist having drinks and a smoke with friends.

Yes, you would do well to think twice and stay sober. Stay in the fight and stay Army strong.

EXPEDITIONARY TIMES

13th ESC Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz

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Expeditionary Times is published weekly by the Stars and Stripes central office, with a circulation of 5,000 papers.

The Public Affairs Office is located on New Jersey Ave. Building 7508, DSN 318-433-2154. Expeditionary Times, HHC 13th ESC, APO AE 09391. Web site at www.dvidshub.net

Contact the Expeditionary Times staff at: expeditionarytimes@iraq.centcom.mil

13th ESC G2, Security Manager
Lt. Col. Angelo Williams, 13th ESC
angelo.williams@iraq.centcom.mil

13th ESC PAO, Managing Editor
Maj. Raul Marquez, 13th ESC PAO
raul.marquez@iraq.centcom.mil

13th ESC PA NCOIC
Staff Sgt. Joel F. Gibson, 13th ESC
joel.f.gibson@iraq.centcom.mil

13th ESC Staff Writer
Spc. Naveed Ali Shah, 13th ESC
naveed.alishah@iraq.centcom.mil

139th MPAD Commander
Capt. Brad Sinkler
bradley.sinkler@iraq.centcom.mil

139th MPAD First Sergeant
1st Sgt. Aangi Mueller
aangi.mueller@iraq.centcom.mil

139th MPAD Production Editor
Staff Sgt. Robert E. Fafoglia
robert.fafoglia@iraq.centcom.mil

139th MPAD Layout and Design
Sgt. Jayson A. Hoffman
jayson.hoffman@iraq.centcom.mil

139th MPAD Photo Editor
Sgt. Keith VanKlompberg
keith.vanklompberg@iraq.centcom.mil

139th MPAD Copy Editor
Spc. Brandy Oxford
brandy.oxford@iraq.centcom.mil

139th MPAD Staff Writers
Sgt. Ryan Twist
ryan.twist@iraq.centcom.mil

Spc. John Stimac
john.stimac@iraq.centcom.mil

Pfc. Lisa A. Cope
lisa.cope@iraq.centcom.mil

Spc. Michael V. Camacho
michael.camacho@iraq.centcom.mil

Contributing Public Affairs Offices

15th Sustainment 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: non-support of family

By SGT. 1ST CLASS JAVIER CRUZ
13TH ESC ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL



It is heart breaking to say some Soldiers are failing in one of the most important tasks in their lives – supporting family members.

Non-support of family has become a common trend in the Army, and we, as leaders, have to do something to help and educate our Soldiers in how to diminish or eliminate this trend.

Non-support assistance cases account for the largest part of the inspector general case load.

Army Regulation 608-99 Family Support, Child Custody, and Paternity, provides guidance to commanders for punitive measures that may be initiated against Soldiers who failed to comply with this regulation or lawful orders based on this regulation.

Chapter 2 of this regulation specifies the legal obligation of the Soldiers with their family members.

There are several different support scenarios that cannot be condensed into an article of this size. The chain of command can refer to the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Web site for a link to the regulation and flow chart for different scenarios.

The link for Soldiers on Joint Base

Balad is <https://www.jbb.iraq.centcom.mil/provider/specialstaff/IG/default.aspx>.

Information for units not at JBB can be obtained by calling one of the 13th ESC IGs.

As stated in the sixth of the seven Army values, integrity – do what is right, legally and morally and be willing to do so even when no one is looking.

Let's do our part, we are not the only ones making sacrifices. Let's take care of our families the same way we take care of our brothers and sisters in uniform. Let's fight and defend them with the same passion and love with which we defend our freedom and the greatest nation in the world.

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

Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

Be SARC smart: When you date someone, communicate your limits clearly with that person from the beginning. Both verbal and nonverbal communication, body language, can be used to ensure the message is understood. 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; you may also call 433-7272 or 443-9001, 122/135 for assistance.

Corrections

In the Dec. 2 Expeditionary Times, the byline for "15th Sustainment Brigade to open info tech testing center" should have read 1st Lt. Michael Anderson. The Expeditionary Times regrets this error.

Interested in a movie?

Check the movie schedule on Page 20

Chaplain's Corner: encourage others to reach their full potential

By LT. COL. WILLIE AILSTOCK
13TH ESC DEPUTY COMMAND CHAPLAIN



What is the picture that you have of those who work, play, and live around you? How do we treat them and look after them?

Sometimes people have more to them than meets the eye and we can be part of the joy of bringing it out in them. The following story could give us some insight on how to treat others.

"Miss Thompson taught Teddy Stallard in the fourth grade. He was a slow, unkempt student, a loner shunned by his classmates.

The previous year his mother died and what little motivation for school he may have once had was now gone.

Miss Thompson didn't particularly

care for Teddy either but at Christmas time he brought her a small present. Her desk was covered with well-wrapped presents from the other children, but Teddy's came in a brown sack.

When she opened it there was a gaudy rhinestone bracelet with half the stones missing and a bottle of cheap perfume.

The children began to snicker but Miss Thompson saw the importance of the moment. She quickly splashed on some perfume and put on the bracelet, pretending Teddy had given her something special.

At the end of the day, Teddy worked up enough courage to softly say, 'Miss Thompson, you smell just like my mother ... and her bracelet looks real pretty on you too. I'm glad you like my presents.'

After Teddy left, Miss Thompson

got down on her knees and prayed for God's forgiveness. She prayed for God to use her as she sought to not only teach these children but to love them as well. She became a new teacher. She lovingly helped students like Teddy and by the end of the year he had caught up with most of the students.

Miss Thompson didn't hear from Teddy for a long time.

Then she received this note: 'Dear Miss Thompson, I wanted you to be the first to know. I will be graduating second in my class. Love, Teddy Stallard.'

Four years later she got another note: 'Dear Miss Thompson, They just told me I will be graduating first in my class. I wanted you to be the first to know. The university has not been easy, but I liked it. Love, Teddy Stallard.'

Four years later: 'Dear Miss Thomp-

son, As of today, I am Theodore Stallard, M.D. How about that? I wanted you to be the first to know. I am getting married next month. I want you to come and sit where my mother would sit if she were alive. You are the only family I have now; Dad died last year. Love, Teddy Stallard.'

Miss Thompson went to the wedding and sat where Teddy's mother would have sat, because she let God use her as an instrument of encouragement.

Let's learn to encourage others to see if we can help them find some locked up potential that might be hidden deep down that they do not realize they have. You can be a blessing to others so that they too might become a blessing to others.

Story contributed to <http://www.sermoncentral.com> by evangelical preacher Richard Sharp.



Give a Shout Out!
Tell your family and friends how much you miss them.
Send a brief message to: expeditionarytimes@iraq.centcom.mil Subject line: "Shout Out"

Wrestlers slam service members with entertainment

WWE FROM PAGE 1

Jason E. Robinson, production designer for WWE and a Knoxville, Tenn., native, said he gets goose bumps every year while watching the stage being built. He said he also gets goose bumps watching thousands of troops salute during the national anthem.

"I'm getting them right now (talking about it)," he said.

The job of every superstar, diva and staff member back at the WWE home office is to put smiles on people's faces all over the world, said McMahon.

"Nowhere do we see such smiles as when we come over here," he said. "To perform before our armed forces is extraordinary."

John Cena, a wrestling superstar, said this is his sixth year traveling overseas to entertain the troops for the holiday season. The superstars and divas stay three or four days and try to meet as many of the uniformed men and women as they can, but the days fly by, he said.

"Today is the day I'm most proud of," he said. "The handshake tour is one thing, but to be able to set up shop and actually broadcast television from here is something special."

Sgt. Michael A. Carruth, battalion maintenance office clerk with Task Force 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment out of McComb, Miss., and a Summit, Miss., native, said he stood next to the entrance ramp and interacted with a lot of the visitors. He said the divas were the highlight of the show,

but he enjoyed the visit as a whole.

Carruth met McMahon, Cena, Chris Jericho, MVP, The Miz, Finley, Alicia Fox, and CM Punk, he said.

"As an avid fan of the WWE, it was fantastic," he said. "I found the superstars of wrestling, and especially Mr. McMahon, to be very humble and friendly. Some went out of their way to say thank you and pose for photos with the troops – very down to earth."

Cena, Carruth's 10-year-old son's hero, gave him an autograph to take home, he said.

"To do that for my son is a once in a life time opportunity," said Carruth.

When Carruth spoke to WWE chairman McMahon, he found McMahon to be sincere in his respect for service members, he said.

"I was only able to shake hands and say 'thank you' to Mr. McMahon before the show; he said 'No, thank you for your service,'" said Carruth. "It seemed that he was genuinely humble and meant it."

Capt. Shawn M. Owens, officer in charge of the joint defense operations center with the 332nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron and a Tuttle, Okla., native, said he does not have a favorite wrestler. His wife and sons' favorite is John Cena, and his boys also like Chris Jericho, he said.

"I like them all, and I just enjoy the fact they came out here to spend some time with us," said Owens.

Owens said the trip the WWE superstars and divas take to come to Iraq and



World Wrestling Entertainment superstars Carlito and Chris Masters sign autographs for service members Dec. 2 at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation center east at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. WWE superstars and divas came to Iraq to film and perform the "WWE Tribute to the Troops," which will air Dec. 19 at 9 p.m. Eastern time.

visit the troops makes the deployment worthwhile.

"It really is just a blessing that they think of us the way they think of us," he said.

McMahon said the WWE staff considers the trip to Iraq a privilege, especially because they spend time with troops when their families cannot. He said he wanted to show his support for the men and woman of the armed services.

"This is a small token of our appreciation on behalf of everybody at WWE,

on behalf of everybody back home," said McMahon. "There is no price tag on that; there is no price tag on freedom. We just came over to say thank you."

Cena said he is passionate in his respect for the armed forces and believes in honor and commitment. He said he takes these beliefs with him every day.

"These men and women make the ultimate commitment to defend my freedom, to defend the United States of America," said Cena. "Words can't describe how proud I am of that."

Iraqi Army camp officially opens

OPEN FROM PAGE 1

with the Tallil Logistics Military Advisory Team and a Fitzgerald, Ga., native, said Al Memona took roughly 14 months and more than \$35 million to complete.

Ramsay said the new base has dry and cold storage abilities, as well as production sights for a few necessities, including ice and a bakery capable of producing more than 600 flatbreads a day.

"From the standpoint of warehousing, ice, bread and fuel, they are going to be sort of a hub for a lot of supplies that support various 10th (Iraqi Army) Division units in the Maysan area," he said.

Iraqi Police Force Staff Maj. Gen. Sa'ad, the Maysan provincial chief of police, said the base exhibits the success of the partnership between Coalition forces and Iraqi Security Forces, and will provide better security for the Maysan province.

"It is another sign of success between ISF and CF," he said. "This location will include elements from IPs, IAs and CF to help ensure stability and prosperity in the province."



Air Force Lt. Col. Steven Ramsay, the senior adviser with the Tallil Logistics Military Advisory Team and a Fitzgerald, Ga., native, presents Iraqi Army Brig. Gen. Amer Abd Al-Wahid Al-Bayat, the base commander at Iraqi Army Camp Al Memona, Iraq, with a gift during the base's ribbon cutting ceremony Dec. 9.

Where do you read your Expeditionary Times?

For distribution, contact the 13th ESC PAO at Joint Base Balad, Iraq

Joint Base Balad :
318-483-4603

COL Adder:
318-833-1002

Camp Taji:
318-834-1281

COL Q-West:
318-827-6101

Al Asad Air Base:
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318-849-2501

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expeditionarytimes@iraq.centcom.mil

Provider Soldiers train Iraqi Army mechanics

By SGT. MATTHEW C. COOLEY
15TH SUST. BDE. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq – Iraqi mechanics trained alongside U.S. Army mechanics in November at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq, in an effort to increase the Iraqi capacity to self-sustain before the U.S. drawdown from Iraq.

Mechanics with the 15th Special Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), helped the 26th Brigade Military Transition Team train mechanics with the Iraqi Army's 26th Infantry Brigade during a four-week course at the 15th's motorpool.

Sgt. Jason Chlarson, motor sergeant Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 15th STB and a Murrayville, Ill., native, trained four Iraqi mechanics and five Iraqi Army operators during the Army's level-two maintenance program.

"The course was designed to prepare the Iraqi Army mechanics to fully assume their maintenance operation and improve their unit's maintenance readi-



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Seth Dow

U.S. Army mechanics train Iraqi Army mechanics during a four-week exercise designed to help the Iraqi Soldiers increase their knowledge and abilities in November at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq, in preparation for the U.S. drawdown from Iraq.

ness," said Sgt. 1st Class Seth Dow, 15th STB maintenance sergeant and a Florida, N.Y., native.

The training included instruction on properly performing preventative maintenance checks and services and

conducting regular services on the M1114 up-armored Humvee, said Dow.

"The Iraqi Army mechanics also received classroom instructions and hands-on training on how to troubleshoot and replace major components

like an engine, transfer case and the turbo charger on their M1114s, as well as many other organizational-level parts such as brakes, rotors, batteries and lights," he said.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Derwin Gibson, the 15th Sust. Bde. logistics training and assistance team coordinator, assisted the IA mechanics as they practiced ordering parts through their supply chain.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Diogenes Acosta, 15th STB maintenance officer and an Enterprise, Ala., native, said he was pleased the mechanics were eager to improve their skills.

"The five members of the Iraqi Army mechanics, in spite of not having experience working with the M1114, (proved) to be very skilled mechanics and (were) eager to improve their mechanic skills," Acosta said.

Dow said he agreed.

"The experience was rewarding for both the Soldiers of 15th STB and the Soldiers of 26th IA Brigade," he said. "They both learned a little bit more about each other, and the Soldiers of 15th STB were able to pass on some technical knowledge to help improve the readiness and future of the Iraqi Army."

WWE holds national anthem singing contest at Holt Stadium

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. RYAN TWIST
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – The United States' national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," is a staple of American history and symbol of national pride.

Twenty-eight service members competed to sing the national anthem before a panel of World Wrestling Entertainment judges Dec. 3 at Holt Stadium at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, before the next day's wrestling match for the troop's entertainment.

The competition allowed service members like Sgt. Jamaal L. Wesley, a cargo specialist with the 159th Seaport Operations Company out of Fort Story, Va., with the 80th Ordnance Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), to showcase their singing talent for the Morale, Welfare and Recreation event, scheduled for national broadcast Dec. 19.

Wesley, a Clinton, N.C., native, who said his favorite childhood wrestling superstar was Junk Yard Dog, was part of a group that won the competition and sang the national anthem before the WWE event began.

He said he recruited Sgt. Denise S. Spencer, a cargo specialist with the 159th SOC and a Pago Pago, American Samoa, native, to sing with him, and later added Spc. Quinton L. Coleman, a cargo special-

ist with the 159th SOC and a Memphis, Tenn., native, to form the winning trio.

This was the group's second performance, he said. The first event was the Army vs. Air Force memorial basketball game for Spc. Michael Cote Jr., said Wesley.

Coleman said the trio has great camaraderie, keeping egos from becoming an issue.

"It is a privilege to sing with them," he said.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Dennis A. White, an assistant logistics officer with Task Force 38 out of Shelbyville, Ind., and a Mooresville, Ind., native, said he and Sgt. Marcus D. Lindsey also competed and placed fifth in the event.

"It was good to see the Army take it to victory," he said. "We were upset because we wanted to win it, but we can live with an Army victory."

White said John Cena is his favorite superstar and he hoped, because he did not win the competition, he would be able to work out with him.

Airmen 1st Class Roz L. Roueche, a traffic management apprentice with the 322nd Expeditionary Logistic Readiness Squadron and a Brady, Texas, native, said she was excited the WWE gave service



Spc. Quinton L. Coleman, a cargo specialist with the 159th Seaport Operations Company out of Fort Story, Va., with the 80th Ordnance Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Memphis, Tenn., native, Sgt. Denise S. Spencer, a cargo specialist with the 159th SOC and a Pago Pago, American Samoa, native, and Sgt. Jamaal L. Wesley, a cargo specialist with the 159th SOC and a Clinton, N.C., native, sing "The Star Spangled Banner" in front of a panel of World Wrestling Entertainment judges Dec. 3 at Holt Stadium at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

members a chance to sing the national anthem before the show.

"It was a great way for all of us to get our 15 minutes of fame," she said. "I really think the trio that won was exceptional. They really gave me chills."

Roueche, whose favorite WWE superstar is Chris Jericho, said some nervous performers wanted to back out but went through with it. When she walked down the ramp, grabbed the microphone and got into the ring, she was excited.

"(The judges) started to ask me questions (and my) nerves almost got the best of me," she said.

She started shaking and wanted to get out of the ring, but remembered to take a deep breath and focus on the song, she said.

"I recall just being happy to be off the stage," said Roueche. "Knowing that I got the chance to do something like this while I was deployed makes me feel very honored."

Providers, civilian contractors work together to draw down from Iraq

By SPC. MICHAEL V. CAMACHO
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Civilian contractors have come together with 49th Transportation Battalion Soldiers to provide assistance to the units reducing personnel and equipment in country, as the drawdown from Iraq approaches.

The 49th Trans. Bn., 90th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) out of Fort Hood, Texas, in conjunction with KBR, Inc. personnel, moves personnel and cargo throughout various sustainment areas of Iraq, using movement control teams and similar elements.

KBR, Inc. contractors assist and augment the 49th's workforce, serving alongside Soldiers to maintain 24-hour

operations in the air and on the ground, said Maj. Janeen Johnson, battalion operations officer with the 49th Trans. Bn.

"KBR makes up approximately 50 percent of the battalion's strength," said Johnson, a Somerville, Mass., native. "They are integrated into all the battalion's functions, from the MCT level up to the battalion level."

They assist the separate MCTs with the verification of cargo and cargo documentation, as well as the upload and download of convoys, said Johnson. At the battalion level, KBR workers process transportation movement requests as part of the theater backhaul operations, she said.

There are 17 MCTs with the 49th Trans. Bn. at all the major transportation and personnel movement hubs, said Johnson.

"A majority of our KBR augmentation is retired military, and ... they bring

their knowledge and experience to the table," she said.

Contractors stay after units go home, providing seamless transitions; this makes them a valuable asset to incoming units, said Johnson.

"They don't necessarily get up and brief classes, but they are there to provide insight and historical knowledge on operations," she said.

The 56th MCT has more than 80 contractors who assist them daily at the Joint Base Balad Passenger and Catfish terminals, said Capt. Corey Walters, company commander with the 56th MCT, 49th Trans. Bn.

They drive the buses and help make manifests for personnel and cargo, said Walters, a Vale, S.D., native.

"There (are) only 16 of us," he said. "If they disappeared, then this mission would cease. We rely on them to get the mission done; they're part of our MCT."

They also provide a level of mentorship to the Soldiers, similar to that of an officer or noncommissioned officer, said Johnson.

Contractors and service members experience little to no friction, said Senior Airman Renaldo Brown, pax terminal movement control team member with the 56th.

"They've been here longer than (us)," said Brown, a Baltimore native. "Some of them have been here three years, four years, five years. They've been through every situation that comes up. If we have any questions, we can resort to them. They're like our own continuity book."

The KBR contractors work with a similar chain of command to that of the military, said Walters.

"In some ways they're held to a higher standard, because their livelihood really depends on their performance," he said.

Course teaches quick reaction to attacks

STORY AND PHOTO BY
CAPT. WILLIAM A. THOMPSON
96TH SUST. BDE.

AL ASAD, Iraq – Soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 751st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), conducted chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear awareness training this month.

Sgt. Ryan Wolf and Spc. Timothy Randolph, both chemical operations specialists with the 751st, were the primary instructors for the training.

Wolf, a Charleston, S.C., native, and Randolph, a Columbia, S.C., native, conducted four training sessions to accommodate the work schedules of the Soldiers within the battalion.

The instructors focused on how to properly don a chemical mask, after hearing, "Gas, gas, gas," the command used in both training and real-world scenarios. Upon hearing this, Soldiers must put on the mask properly and seal it within nine seconds.

Wolf explained the importance of these procedures, as well as the amount of time Soldiers have to clear contaminated areas once they put on their masks.

Randolph demonstrated the proper way of putting on Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology. This is the official name of the chemical suit used by service members operating in a chemical, biological or



The commanding general for the Fort Hood, Texas-based 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, conducted the re-enlistment ceremony for 1st Sgt. Francis Halmsteiner, the senior noncommissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 13th ESC, and Staff Sgt. Fernando Flores, operations NCO for HHC, 13th ESC, Oct. 6 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

nuclear environment. It is also used as an emergency measure.

Randolph said he enjoyed taking the time to train service members on such crucial and mission-essential equipment.

"It's good to work in my (military

occupational specialty) ... I'm willing to do whatever is asked of me for the good of the company," he said.

After completing the training, Soldiers did a thorough check of their chemical masks, ensuring they were in proper repair and working order.

Capt. Misty Aycock, the logistics officer with the 751st CSSB, and a Columbia, S.C., native, said she found the training informative.

"I enjoyed the training because I haven't done it for a while, but I hope I never have to use it," she said.

Transportation Soldiers better community through fellowship

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. KEITH S. VAN KLOMPENBERG
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – The 49th Transportation Battalion, out of Fort Hood, Texas, held a men's prayer breakfast Dec. 5 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, as part of its effort to leave the community here better than they found it.

"This was a follow-up to Chaplain (Capt. Carlos A.) Molina's women's prayer dinner," said Lt. Col. Peter Haas, commander of the 49th Trans. Bn. and a Fleetwood, Penn., native.

Haas said the women's prayer dinner was a big success, so a men's event was requested.

"The goal was to focus on ministry to men and give men the opportunity to worship without offending anyone," said Molina, chaplain for the 49th Trans. Bn., 90th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, native.

Molina said the two events, which featured worship music, readings from the Bible and a short sermon, allowed him to offer fellowship catered to a specific demographic without leaving anyone out.

The event, open to men at JBB, was part of an effort by the 49th to improve the community.

"What I'm trying to do is reach out beyond the battalion," said Molina.

Though his area of expertise is in the field of ministry, Molina said the 49th has begun a sort of "good neighbor project" to improve JBB as a whole.

"As part of the Balad community, we felt like we should do something to make it a better place to serve," said Haas.

Earlier this year, the 49th adopted Killeen Field, an athletic field at JBB, as part of this project.

Volunteers from the unit clean the field three to four times a week, said Hass, and the 49th coordinated with the 90th Ordnance Battalion to install new lights and build a shed next to the field.

"We live on a large post," said Molina, "and we're part of a joint effort."



Chief Warrant Officer David Marriott, an automotive technician with the 514th Support Maintenance Company, 80th Ordnance Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a St. Petersburg, Fla., native, performs a worship song at the Men's Prayer Breakfast Dec. 5 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

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6. Room is neat and orderly

Transportation Soldiers earn combat patches

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. ALEXANDERA-REESE TOLBERT,
96TH SUST. BDE.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Soldiers with the 498th Trans. Co., 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) received combat patches, formally called shoulder-sleeve insignia, in recognition of their service in a combat zone, Nov. 19 during a ceremony at Camp Taji, Iraq.

These Soldiers will wear the 143rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) combat patch.

Spc. April Lamb, a communications specialist and an Ellisville, Miss., native, is serving her first tour of duty.

"I can always look at the patch on my right shoulder and be reminded of my sacrifices, and of those that have served before me," she said.

The 143rd ESC's patch contains

two arrows pointing in opposite directions against a maroon background. All deployed Soldiers who fall under the 498th Trans. Co. may wear the patch.

Staff Sgt. Royal Hepburn, a truck driver and a Wetumpka, Ala., native, has served for eight years and deployed once before as a truck driver.

"To me, the combat patch symbolizes the accomplishment of a mission, pride in one's self, being part of an elite force, an Army Soldier," said Hepburn. "To do what you're told to do, and having confidence in our job. I am proud to wear my combat patch. It is the symbol of pride and the sacrifice I myself and my family have made. We do this because America loves us."

Sgt. Charmion Price, a human resources specialist and a Port Charlotte, Fla., native, agreed that the patch is symbolic of his service as a Soldier.

"This just symbolizes me doing my job," he said. "It is nice to have, but this is what I signed up for and what I get paid for. It shows that I have made the ultimate risk for our country."



Soldiers with the 498th Transportation Company, 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) out of Mobile, Ala., await the start of the unit's combat patching ceremony Nov. 19 at Camp Taji, Iraq.

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Soldiers begin to assemble fuel farm at Adder

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. 1ST CLASS TAD BROWNING
36TH SUST. BDE. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION ADDER, Iraq – Soldiers with the 36th Sustainment Brigade and the 305th Quartermaster Company prepared and installed fuel bags and liners as part of fuel farm operations Nov. 28 at Contingency Operating Location Adder, Iraq, to consolidate fueling operations in Multi National Division – South.

Capt. Smiley Garcia, the officer in charge of petroleum operations for the 36th Sust. Bde., 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) said it was the first of three phases.

“This is the first phase of our fuel depot here at (COL) Adder,” said Garcia. “With current operations, the fuel hub for MND-S is at Camp Cedar ... This operation will consolidate Cedar and Adder, with Adder becoming the fuel hub for MND-S. Eventually, the Cedar Hub is going to discontinue and Adder will be the hub for MND-S.”

Operation Throwdown had roughly 80 Soldiers installing the liners, positioning sandbags and installing the fuel bags that make up the fuel farm.



Pfc. Gregory Vasquez, a petroleum specialist with the 305th Quartermaster Company out of Fort Campbell, Ky., ensures sandbags are placed around the fuel liners on a berm that is part of a new fuel farm under construction at Contingency Operating Location Adder, Iraq. The fuel farm will supply fuel to southern Iraq during the responsible drawdown of forces.

The operation was completed ahead of schedule due to the teamwork on the ground.

Sgt. Dale Fuller, Jr., a fuel specialist with the Texas National Guard's 36th Sust. Bde., said he was surprised

at the team's efficiency.

“It all happened so fast,” said Fuller, an Austin, Texas, native. “They said three days. I was looking at a week from prior experience. Everything came together perfectly.”

The 732nd Naval Petroleum Detachment and KBR, Inc. contractors worked together for the project, said Garcia.

“It's important to maintain those partnerships between ourselves and partner units, and also our civilian contractors at KBR and our intra-service components,” Garcia said. “As long as we keep that team intact, everything will run efficiently.”

Consolidating the fuel farm should help the drawdown of Soldiers and equipment from Iraq, Fuller said.

“Recentralizing, cutting down on bases, revamping it all will make this fuel farm more efficient,” he said. “Taking everything that was wrong with Cedar ... taking all of the flaws out of it is going to speed up operations ... Everything will be centralized here. It will give more time for maintenance, more time for convoy (operations).”

Pfc. Gregory Vasquez-Ortiz, a petroleum specialist with the 305th Quartermaster Company out of Fort Campbell, Ky., did quality control on the placement of the sandbags and said the operation will help logistics considerably.

“All of the fuel that is going to be moving through (southern) Iraq; everything is going to be on one base,” said Vasquez.

Mississippians inoculate against H1N1 flu virus at Q-West

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

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq – Mississippi Army National Guard members began receiving vaccinations for the H1N1 flu virus Nov. 28 at the base defense operations center at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq.

Soldiers with 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms out of Senatobia, Miss., received the vaccine, in an effort overseen by the 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) out of Fort Hood, Texas.

“We want to get a head start on the holiday travel season by inoculating Soldiers who will be going home on leave,” said Capt. John B. Balman, a surgeon with the 15th Sust. Bde. “We received all the doses we need and our goal is to have 100 percent of Soldiers inoculated by Dec. 31.”

To facilitate the effort, the 15th's medical team conducted inoculations at the tactical operation centers of its four subordinate battalions, said Balman.

“Going to the TOCs to administer the vaccinations is easier for the units,” said Balman, a Temple, Texas, native. “It's convenient, and the bat-

talion medics support us. We can still utilize the troop medical clinic for anyone who misses that effort.”

With the support of battalion medics, Balman said his team can give 150 to 200 vaccinations per hour. He said the brigade should be at 90 percent by mid-December.

“Getting the vaccination will minimize the spread of the virus and decrease lost work hours that might otherwise occur,” he said. “The medical community is concerned about possible mutations that could spread worldwide and the immediate concern for the military is to protect Soldiers and their families.”

Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy R. Tullos, medical platoon sergeant with the 2/198th CAB and a Florence, Miss., native, praised the 15th's initiative.

“It was great that the 15th reached out like that,” said Tullos. “By coming to the battalion TOC, they made the process much more convenient and this is a crucial vaccination. Without it, the virus could threaten our ability to continue our mission.”

Balman praised the support of the 2/198th CAB medics who assisted the brigade medical team.

“The 2/198th CAB medics were very helpful in facilitating the process,” he said. “They helped us increase the number of vaccinations.”

Tullos said the Mississippi medics also benefitted from participating.

“They are combat medics, and don't often get a chance to practice their clinical skills and help with medical documentation,” he said. “These are important skills and it was great that they got a chance to practice them.”

Sgt. Julia R. Goins, a senior medic with A Company, 2/198th CAB and a Jackson, Miss., native, emphasized the importance of the vaccination.

“It's important to provide the vaccination against H1N1 to protect the force, to keep the Soldiers mission-ready,” said Goins. “With all the Soldiers going home on leave, there is a high chance of them contracting the virus. The vaccination builds up the individuals' immunities.”

Capt. Tulio D. Chirinos, 2/198th CAB adjutant and a Jacksonville, Fla.,



Staff Sgt. Tony T. Ware, the Department of Public Works noncommissioned officer in charge and a Grenada, Miss., native, receives a vaccination for the H1N1 flu virus from Sgt. Julia R. Goins, a senior medic and a Jackson, Miss., native, Nov. 28 at the base defense operations center of Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq. Both are members of 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms, a Mississippi Army National Guard unit out of Senatobia, Miss., serving as the Q-West force protection company.

native, said he was confident the battalion would have 100 percent of Soldiers inoculated by the deadline.

“On the first day we inoculated about 50 percent of the battalion,” said Chirinos. “Right now, we're standing at 70 percent. About 11 percent of our Soldiers are home on rest and relaxation or emergency leave, but they will get the shots when they return.”

Mississippi's top Guard leaders visit Q-West on Thanksgiving

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

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq – The adjutant general and the command sergeant major of the Mississippi National Guard visited Mississippians serving throughout Iraq, stopping at Contingency Operating Location Q-West on Thanksgiving.

Brig. Gen. William L. Freeman, Jr., and Command Sgt. Maj. Donald L. Cooley toured bases to see Soldiers with the 155th Brigade Combat Team out of Tupelo, Miss., and spent several hours in the company areas of 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms out of Senatobia, Miss., which oversees Q-West's base defense operations center, the mayor cell basic life support operations, and fields three convoy security companies.

"Brig. Gen. Freeman and Command Sgt. Maj. Cooley have always been engaged leaders," said Lt. Col. Kerry Goodman, commander of 2/198th CAB and a Meridian, Miss., native. "They have made it a habit of participating in training and just being around Soldiers. I admire their dedication to the troops of the Mississippi National Guard and respect their leadership. It was notable that they left their families to visit us during the Thanksgiving holiday."

Freeman offered holiday greetings and praise to the Soldiers.

"I wanted to be here in person to wish you a happy and safe Thanks-



Brig. Gen. William L. Freeman, Jr., the adjutant general of the Mississippi National Guard, speaks with Soldiers from C Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms out of Oxford, Miss., during a Nov. 26 visit to Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq. C Co. provides convoy security for logistics operations throughout northern Iraq. The adjutant general and the command sergeant major of the Mississippi National Guard visited Mississippians serving throughout Iraq, stopping for several hours at Q-West on Thanksgiving.

giving from the home front," he told a gathering of Soldiers. "I wanted to thank you for your service. Everything I hear about the Soldiers of the 2/198th CAB is good. You are doing a great job over here."

Freeman said the Mississippi National Guard is preparing for the Soldiers' return; to ease their transition back to civilian life, starting with the mobilization site.

"When you return to Mississippi for

demobilization, you will find improvements at Camp Shelby, which is one of the country's enduring mobilization sites," he said. "We are investing in a brand new Post Exchange complex and we have improved the Clothing Sales section."

Freeman also talked about the Department of Defense Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, designed to help Guard and Reserve members through the deployment cycle.

"You all had a great Yellow Ribbon event prior to deploying and we want you to have a great one when you get back," he said. "Your families were very much involved in that event and we need to keep them involved in the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program when you return.

We have 30, 60 and 90-day events planned, which will inform you and your families about things like your (Veteran's Administration) benefits, job opportunities and other services to help your transition."

Cooley also emphasized the Guard's support for families.

"If your family is having financial problems during your deployment, the Family Relief Fund can help," he said. "The Guard can help if families need it."

Cooley told the Mississippians they need to plan for their return home, and he emphasized the importance of furthering their military educations.

"During the reset time in those months when your unit first gets home, you need to go to school," he said. "The opportunity will be there, so take it. You should be preparing for whatever leader's course you need, whether it's (Warrior Leader's Course), (Basic Non-commissioned Officer's Course) or (Advanced Non-Commissioned Officer's Course). You are the future leaders of the Mississippi National Guard, so attend those schools."

Lt. Col. James L. Sisson, commander of 2nd Battalion, 114th Field Artillery out of Starkville, Miss., traveled from Contingency Operating Location Marez, Iraq, to be with G Company, 106th Brigade Support Battalion out of Louisville, Miss., a unit attached to his battalion.

Sisson, a Madison, Miss., native, said he was impressed by the visit.

"It was great to see the senior leadership from Mississippi take time during the Thanksgiving holiday to visit bases where Mississippi Soldiers are serving, and we have Soldiers spread all over Iraq," he said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Perry Campbell, senior ranking noncommissioned officer with the 2/198th CAB and a Senatobia, Miss., native, said the visit showed good leadership.

"They did what good leaders should do," said Campbell. "They spent the holidays with the troops who are away from family in harm's way. Soldiers admire that. The message was supportive and it got us thinking about how to prepare for returning to our families, and the Soldiers needed to hear that."



Brig. Gen. William L. Freeman, Jr. (left), the adjutant general of the Mississippi National Guard, speaks with Soldiers from B Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms out of Greenwood, Miss., during a Nov. 26 visit to Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq. B Co. provides convoy security for logistics operations throughout northern Iraq. The adjutant general and the command sergeant major of the Mississippi National Guard visited Mississippians serving throughout Iraq, stopping for several hours at Q-West on Thanksgiving.

Transportation company assists units in preparation for drawdown

BY 1ST LT. MARIA E. SCHMITZ
264TH CSSB

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION SPEICHER, Iraq –



The transportation corps' creed reads: "I am transportation, the spearhead of logistics ... and nothing happens until something moves."

As operational tempo increases to support the upcoming responsible drawdown of U.S. forces and equipment from Iraq, transportation Soldiers move equipment throughout the Iraqi theater, said 1st Lt. Reginald Davis, executive officer with the 1083rd Transportation Company, 264th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Shreveport, La., native.

Spc. Jamie Gryder, a heavy equipment transport system operator and a Shreveport, La., native, said the significance of her efforts helps her to remain mission-focused.

"The highway is extremely dangerous and we are subject to attack at any given time," she said.

The 1083rd Trans. Co., operating under the motto "The House of the Warrior," spends anywhere from two to 10 days on the road each mission. They drive all night, operating between work and rest cycles during the day at camps along the route.

Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Levesque, a platoon



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

Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Levesque, a platoon sergeant with the 1083rd Transportation Company and a Bossier City, La., native, oversees the loading of tanks during a recent operational move.

toon sergeant and a Bossier City, La., native, had a different experience as a transportation Soldier on his previous deployment.

"Back in 2003, during the initial push, we could not drive after dark in

Iraq," Levesque said.

The 1083rd Trans. Co. Soldiers follow a constant rotation of missions on the road such as an operational move for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, which involved hauling more

than 50 M1A2 Abrams tanks in addition to other assets Oct. 27 through Nov. 16.

Davis said, "The significance of their efforts becomes more apparent as time draws closer for troops and equipment to be out of the country."

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Convoy 911: Joint unit extends battle-space communication

BY SENIOR AIRMAN
ANDRIA J. ALLMOND
332ND AIR EXPEDITIONARY WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – As coalition convoys travel the roads of Iraq, C-130 Hercules aircraft circle overhead, listening to ground radio traffic, ready to respond if a friendly convoy makes an emergency transmission.

Keeping those C-130s flying is the mission of the Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors and Marines with the 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, Joint Airborne Battle Staff Detachment. The unit provides immediate and reliable command, control and communication support for operational and strategic ground convoy movements.

"We provide the overhead security and are basically the 911 for the convoys out there, in case they need help," said Capt. Craig Barrington, JABS detachment commander. "Communication is the life blood of any operation. It can make the difference in operational success or failure."

Represented by all four Defense Department service branches, the four- or five-member aircrews simultaneously listen to five radio channels, identifying calls for assistance. When required, the teams transmit voice communications from the convoys in need to the appropriate ground stations.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Christopher Hubenthal

Service members with the 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron joint airborne battle staff detachment prepare for a mission on a C-130 Hercules Nov. 24 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. The JABS is a joint operation focused on providing airborne communications support to ground forces.

"We are here to provide communication links between convoys and their respective headquarters," said Barrington. "This is accomplished through radio relay, significant event reporting and, if needed, the ability to react to life-threatening situations."

While embodying the "one-team, one-fight" mantra, each military branch contributes differently to the mission – with the Air Force and Navy filling most of the leadership positions.

"The Air Force typically provides the aircrew experience, communications technicians and officer leadership for

the detachment," said Air Force Maj. Brian Neff, former Multinational Corps – Iraq JABS commander. "The Navy provides a wealth of communication experience, as well as the enlisted leadership. The Army and Marines both offer a unique experience, as many have previously deployed as (communications) operators in convoys, and now they are deployed in support of this mission."

Knowing what their counterparts on the ground are going through gives some Soldiers and Marines with the 777th a special dedication to the job.

"I take the job seriously, knowing

that I was on the other end before," said Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Gene Gibbs, a communications operator and Charleston, S.C., native. "I believe my experience supplies me with a greater dedication to duty. When we get a phone call from a Soldier or any coalition force on the ground, I treat it as if I'm on the ground."

While the crew members relate to their comrades below, they appreciate the value of the JABS mission.

"I know (ground convoys) can be nerve-wracking at times," said Sgt. Michael Wisdom, a communications operator deployed from Fort Hood, Texas. "I've been on the road but never in a situation where I've needed life support. But knowing that this team could provide emergency relief like that at a moment's notice is the highlight of the job."

Lt. Col. Sean Bordenave, 777th EAS commander, said the constant flow of 13-hour, dusk-till-dawn missions could not happen without the successful assimilation of the difference service branches and their specialties.

"From the perspective of a commander, the thing I've found absolutely unique here is the teamwork," Bordenave said. "From the maintenance team generating the aircraft and working those last-minute maintenance issues, to the air battle staff and crew getting prepped for and flying some very long missions -- it is absolutely phenomenal."

Operation Back to School provides humanitarian aid

BY SPC. MICHAEL V. CAMACHO
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION TAJI, Iraq – U.S. and Iraqi Army Soldiers delivered kits filled with school supplies to Iraqi schoolchildren at Al Waleed School Dec. 6 near Contingency Operating Location Taji, Iraq.

A volunteer committee founded Operation Back to School, delivering its first gifts in October and performing seven missions total to improve the lives of schoolchildren in Iraq, said Maj. Robert Edwards, a committee member with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 155th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

Program volunteers assemble the kits or assist with the distribution at school sites, said Lt. Col. Kent Wong, a program manager for Operation Back to School with the 821st Expeditionary Training Squadron, 321st Air Expeditionary Training Group, 321st Air Expeditionary Wing.

"A lot of the schools are very poor,

in a poor area, and a lot of the school kids don't have the basic necessities," said Wong, a Houston native. "Some of the kits we give the school kids, they've never seen some of the supplies before. It's great that we're able to provide this to them."

Volunteers gather to fill the kits and pack them into boxes every Friday afternoon, said Edwards, a Saltillo, Miss., native. This includes special kits for teachers, to help better educate their students, he said.

Every week, more volunteers join the ranks of service members working to educate the next generation of Iraqi leaders, he said.

Area children come from families in varying financial states, so some do not have access to the same school supplies as others, said Spc. Raheem Townes, operations specialist with the 1479th Civil Affairs Detachment, 1st Battalion, 5th Brigade.

The kits contain everyday items children need for school, said Spc. Lorraine Perez, an Operation Back to School volunteer with the 3666th maintenance Company, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th ESC.

"We put in three folders, a Composition note book, loose paper, colored pencils, an eraser, a sharpener,

scissors and a ruler," said Perez. "I think they're going to appreciate everything they have and take care of it."

The committee for Operation Back to School has solicited donations, using its Web page and advertisements in the Taji area, said Edwards.

"(Service members) send word back to their families and friends and then, by word of mouth, it spreads," he said. "The word's gotten out. We've received donations from all over the country."

Edwards said the operation saw a huge response from schools, organizations, other units and individuals.

"Up to this point we've gotten over 5,000 kits, donated over 500 soccer balls and we put together two sets of soccer goals to leave at the schools," he said.

The mission focuses on children who attend rural schools with anywhere from 300 to 400 students, said Edwards. The schools are outside the major city areas and have had little exposure to U.S. Forces, he said.

Joint Forces move the packed boxes to schools where Iraqi Army Soldiers distribute them to the students. Because these missions are a surprise to students and faculty, the children

can be leery at first, he said.

"The kids have been lied to; they've been told we're evil and this, that and the other by the bad guys, the insurgency," he said. "We're here to counter that and show them that we're humans and we're there to help."

Edwards said sometimes the children are unfamiliar with the supplies, but with the aid of an interpreter, the items' uses are explained to them. The children respond well to the Soldiers' presence and accept the gifts, he said.

"It's fostering a partnership between them and us, as well as showing Iraq's future leaders, the children in the schools, that the Iraqi Army is there to help them," he said. "They are not something to be feared, like they have been in the past under (Saddam Hussein's) regime."

The program is a step toward helping the next generation of Iraqi citizens, said Wong.

"The school supplies may only last for a couple months, but I think the long-term benefit of this is the relationship between our country and the country of Iraq," he said. "The people, the kids, will recognize that America is (here to help) them and they care about (them)."

13th ESC wins Amazing

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. RYAN TWIST
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Service members ran a race, played golf blindfolded and choked down the “grossest” food the chow hall had to offer Dec. 5 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, to raise money for the Combined Federal Campaign – Overseas.

Thirteen four-member teams participated in the CFC Amazing Race, to compete to have a \$300 check donated to the CFC in their name. The CFC supports charitable organizations through philanthropy by federal employees.

Senior Master Sgt. Bryan Shipman, a superintendent of protocol with the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing and a Norfolk, Va., native, served as the Air Force CFC representative.

“We noticed there were no combined events with the Army or anyone else,” he said. “We teamed with the 13th (Sustainment Command (Expeditionary)) and the 194th Engineer Brigade and we came together with this alternate Amazing Race event.”

In the past few weeks, the representatives worked together to plan activities and events for teams to raise awareness and money for the CFC, said Shipman.

The planners coordinated the events, set up the stations and made sure there was continuity with the food, event times and reserved locations, he said.

Master Sgt. Kimberly D. Bergman, a 13th ESC career counselor and a Chicago native, said no other



Sgt. Austin A. Nightingale, operation executive administrative assistant with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) out of Fort Hood, Texas, and Maj. Erik A. Enyart, a brigade aviation officer with the 13th ESC, eat bread pudding and raisins at the Mirage dining facility during the Combined Federal Campaign – Overseas Amazing Race Dec. 5 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Nightingale, a Missoula, Mont., native, and Enyart, a Radcliff, Ky., native, were part of the winning team, the Urban Logistickers, which won a \$300 dollar check donated to the CFC in their name.

CFC-O event has had all the major commands from their base organized together.

Instead of commanders doing their own events for CFC-O, they came together as a whole – Army and Air Force, said Bergman.

“It was an awesome time,” she said. “Everyone brought their own strengths ... which (were) reflected in the different challenges that we had.”

The 13th ESC created a crossword puzzle event, testing competitors’ knowledge of Army and Air Force history, said Bergman.

The 194th Engineers and the JBB Fire Department hosted department specific challenges, she said.

“It was a lot of work on our part but we enjoyed it and it seems all the participants enjoyed it,” she said.

Spc. Martha A. Bolt, a paralegal specialist with the



Spc. Kimberly N. Dover, a medic at the Troop Medical Center with the 248th Area Support Medical Company out of Marietta, Ga., and a Cartersville, Ga., native, watches her teammate, Capt. Jason K. Hesser, a doctor at the TMC, with the 248th ASMC and a Crete, Neb., native, try to putt blindfolded.



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ing Race charity run

13th ESC and a Sussex, N.J., native, said the event was fun and helped the service members get a good workout.

Bolt, who was on the Urban Logistickers team, said the hardest part of the event was the eating competition at the Mirage dining facility.

She drew a number and had to eat banana pudding with raisins. Other numbered items included sardines, refried beans and tuna.

Her teammate, Maj. Erik A. Enyart, a brigade aviation officer with the 13th ESC and a Radcliff, Ky., native, said blind golfing and chow-hall eating were the hardest parts of the event.

Spc. Kimberly N. Dover, a medic with the 248th Area Support Medical Company out of Marietta, Ga., with the 61st Multifunctional Medical Brigade and a Cartersville, Ga., native, won third place with the Sickcall Rangers and said the food challenge was not her favorite part either.

"I'm just a really picky eater ... and it was gross," she said. "None of it was really difficult; that was just the nastiest part."

Dover said pushing and pulling water hoses at the fire department was the highlight of the competition.

The event mirrored a scavenger hunt combined with a 5 km race, said Dover.

The activities were set up at locations throughout JBB and teams had to accomplish each task before they could head to the final destination, the Morale, Welfare and Recreation center east, she said.

"It was fun and it got everybody out here on their Saturday morning, instead of sitting in their (bedroom) doing nothing," she said.

In the end, service members came together and had a blast to support a great cause, which Bergman said was all she could ask for.

"I think it was great," she said. "I think CFC is very important. I'm looking forward to perhaps maybe doing another one before we get out of here."



Capt. Kimberly Wahler, a physician's assistant with the 248th Area Support Medical Company out of Marietta, Ga., plays a video game during the Combined Federal Campaign – Overseas Amazing Race at the United Service Organization Dec. 5 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Wahler, a Marietta, Ga., native, competed as part of team Sickcall Rangers, which placed third in the competition.



Team Born Ready builds a structure that must withstand wind and water to win an engineer challenge at the Combined Federal Campaign – Overseas Amazing Race Dec. 5 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. The CFC supports charitable organizations through philanthropy by federal employees

Team Urban Logistickers, with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) out of Fort Hood, Texas, accepts a \$300 check from Col. Knowles Y. Atchison, deputy commander with the 13th ESC, for winning the Combined Federal Campaign – Overseas Amazing Race Dec. 5 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. The check will be donated to the CFC in recognition of the winners.

Medical officers host Silver Caduceus Society Call at Taji

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

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION TAJI, Iraq – Medical service corps officers at Contingency Operating Location Taji, Iraq, hosted a Silver Caduceus Society Call Dec. 5 to facilitate the professional development of the unit's Soldiers.

Medical Company C with the 115th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division in conjunction with the 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), held its first Silver Caduceus Society Call in two years. This event provided a rally point for medical service corps officers to gather and meet with peers in the Taji area and talk about career development and progression in the field, said Capt. Tyler Cortner, C Co. commander with the 1/1 Cav. Div.

"We support the medical corps and the Warfighter, going between the medics on the battlefield and the doctors in the hospitals," said Cortner, a Tulsa, Okla., native.

Cortner said there are roughly 10 medical elements at Taji. The Silver Caduceus Society Call acts as a conduit for medical officers to network and develop a professional association in their area of responsibility, he said.

"If we can network and share resources, it really provides better care



Lt. Col. Ronald Krough, chief of staff with Task Force 1st Medical Brigade and a Seattle native, speaks to fellow medical service officers at a Silver Caduceus Society Call at Contingency Operating Location Taji, Iraq. This was the first Silver Caduceus Call at COL Taji in two years.

for the Soldiers that are out here supporting the combat," said Cortner.

Because each medical element has different resources at its disposal, meeting with other officers opens opportunities to share, said Capt. Brent Lindley, staff officer with the Taji Mayor's Cell, 155th HBCT.

Networking is important, especially in Iraq, where needs change rapidly, said Lindley, a Hattiesburg, Miss., native.

"It's a lot easier when you have to call and ask for something or ask for

help, if you've already met them and you've already established some rapport," he said. "It's important to know who's doing what and what the capabilities in the area are. It puts you in position to meet any challenge that comes up down the road."

Cortner said now is the time for collaboration, to help one another with career goals. Those who attended the call discussed education opportunities and career development choices, getting feedback from one another's experiences in an open forum.

He also said experience brings wisdom and a better understanding of career progression. Senior officers attended the call to speak to the junior officers and share their knowledge in the career field, including guest speaker Lt. Col. Ronald Krough, chief of staff with Task Force 1st Medical Brigade.

Medical service corps is a broad area that offers myriad opportunities and paths, said Krough.

"We have over 20 different specialties in the medical service corps," he said. "So some of these young lieutenants and captains have to decide by the time they have eight years or so in, and mentoring helps (them) do that."

The methods and technology within the medical service have changed, but the people they serve and the mission stay the same, said Krough.

Units with the 13th ESC, 1st Cav. Div. and 2nd Infantry Division, attended the event, but all serve the same purpose, said Cortner.

"We all kind of come together and support each other because we really have one mission, and that's to take care of patients," he said.

Cortner said meetings during deployment time can be an obstacle, when several groups are involved in a Silver Caduceus Society.

"One of the unique things about a Silver Caduceus Society is that you can just plant your flag in the ground anywhere you are," he said. "It's mobile; it can be in garrison or in a deployed environment."

Holidays add to deployment stress

STORY AND PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY
SGT. KEITH S. VAN KLOMPENBERG
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Holiday joy and holiday stress go hand in hand, especially for deployed service members and their families.

For those serving at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, the Air Force Mental Health Clinic and the 55th Medical Combat Stress Control clinic can assist service members and civilians who are overwhelmed or overstressed this holiday season. Similar services are offered to service members and Department of Defense civilians theater-wide and stateside.

"People often get stressed around the holidays because they try to do too much – they overextend themselves financially and they have unrealistic expectations of themselves and others," said Air Force Maj. David Linkh, chief of the 332nd Expeditionary Aerospace Medicine Squadron Air Force Mental Health Clinic at JBB and a Queens, N.Y., native.

"Deployed personnel have an added challenge insofar as they are separated

from their loved ones and may miss their comforting holiday rituals, an opportunity to visit with extended family and religious observances with their congregation."

Maj. Saul Cardona, the family life chaplain with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), said separation is the biggest stressor during long deployments, in addition to combat operations and exhausting work hours.

Cardona, an Añasco, Puerto Rico, native, said separation from loved ones around the holidays can create a sense of emptiness in Soldiers that could lead them to take unnecessary risks or become careless during missions.

"Separation creates an emotional vacuum that attracts behaviors and consequences that can affect the overall mission," he said.

Deployed service members who are stressed or alone should connect with the people around them, said Cardona.

Linkh said stressed Warfighters should use simplicity to avoid becoming overwhelmed.

"Don't try to make up for your absence by overspending online or planning the once-in-a-lifetime trip to Disney World immediately upon your return," he said.

"Give it time. There will be opportunities to celebrate with family and friends when the deployment ends."

As hard as it can be to be away from home this time of year, Linkh said service members' families struggle just as much at home.

Linkh said Warfighters should maintain open lines of communication to help their families get through deployments, but it is important to remain realistic when planning phone calls and e-mails.

"It is important to be flexible and find a schedule that works for you, and takes high holiday volume and other complications into account," he said.

Cardona said family members can reach out and volunteer to make the most out of the holidays.

"Helping others is a very effective way of combating stress while helping

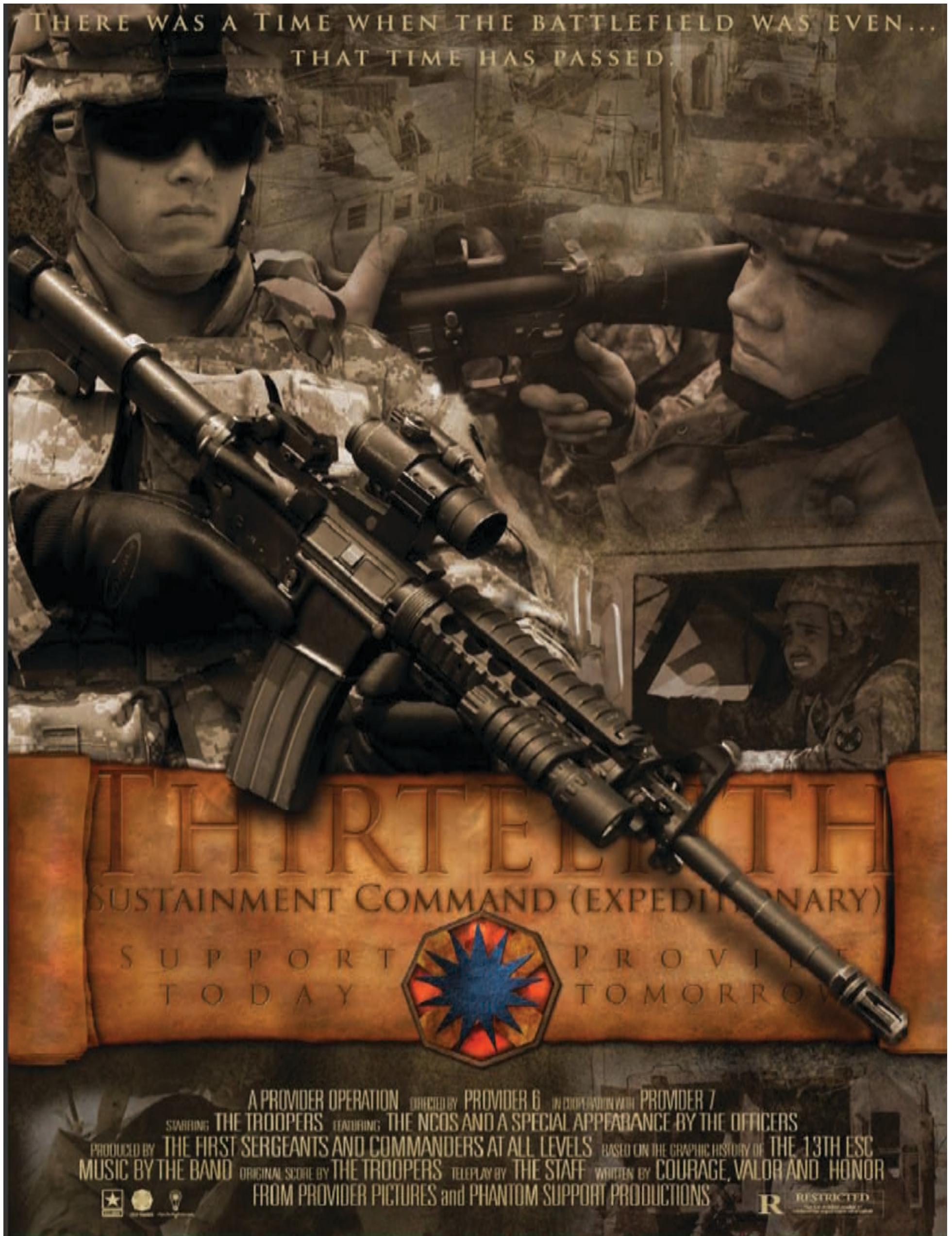


The Air Force Mental Health Clinic and the 55th Medical Combat Stress Control clinic at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, offer services to service members and civilians who are overwhelmed during the holidays or any time of year.

to maintain healthy human connection," he said.

Linkh said low-key activities – without setting expectations too high – can help keep stress levels on an even keel during the holidays.

"Trying to do everything they might normally do during the holiday season in 10 to 14 days could be a recipe for burnout, and a less than enjoyable holiday for all involved," he said.



THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE BATTLEFIELD WAS EVEN...
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THIRTEENTH
SUSTAINMENT COMMAND (EXPEDITIONARY)

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After nearly 20 years, Soldiers reunite at JBB

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. JOHN STIMAC
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Five service members stationed together roughly 20 years ago at Camp Dahn, Germany, reunited at the Desert Inn dining facility Dec. 3 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.



Balad, Iraq.

Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth H. Tincknell, the senior enlisted adviser with the 80th Ordnance Battalion, said they were all stationed together at Camp Dahn in 1991.

“We were part of the 20th Ordnance Company,” he said. “I was a specialist then and we did a lot of work during the height of the Gulf War, primarily closing down some ammo sites in Germany.”

“Today is the first day all five of us will be together. This brings back a lot of fond memories, and I haven’t seen some of them since 1992.”

Tincknell, a Huntsville, Ala., native, said he stayed in touch with retired Master Sgt. Wayne Tadlock, now a civilian ammunition inspector for the Army Materiel Command.

Tadlock was Tincknell’s squad leader at that time, and said he took him to the E-5 promotion board.

“(Tincknell) had a good work ethic,” he said. “He was always squared away and made me try to do better. It isn’t a surprise at all that all these guys did really well.”

Tadlock said his platoon leader borrowed a book from him back then and never returned it. He was anxious to see if, 20 years later, he would see that book again.

Lt. Col. Lew E. Cureton, munitions support operations officer in charge with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), said he still has the



From left to right: Lt. Col. Lew E. Cureton, retired Master Sgt. Wayne Tadlock, Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth H. Tincknell, Sgt. Maj. Gene E. Canada and Sgt. 1st Class Brian D. Johnson reconnect at the Desert Inn dining facility Dec. 3 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. The five men served together roughly 20 years ago at Camp Dahn, Germany, and are now all deployed together.

book and plans on mailing it back to Tadlock.

“Mr. Tadlock has joked about charging me 10 cents a day – tax for every day the book was late,” said Cureton. “I’ve had that book for 18 years, three months and 7 days; that would be a pretty hefty fine.”

Cureton said he was a first lieutenant at the time he was the group’s platoon leader.

“I absolutely knew these guys would go far in the Army,” said Cureton. “They are the best Soldiers I have ever seen.”

Cureton, a Cove, Ark., native, said he was excited to see his old friends all together again.

“The company we were in had the most sense of family cohesion that I have been a part of,” he said. “It was

like seeing brothers again, after a long time.”

Sgt. Maj. Gene E. Canada, logistics sergeant major with the 13th ESC and an Austin, Texas, native, said he was also excited to see everyone and praised their career progressions.

“It is a testament to some good past leaders,” said Canada. “Our continued service is for the love of the military.”

Sgt. 1st Class Brian D. Johnson, Canada’s roommate from Camp Dahn and the core storage area noncommissioned officer in charge with the 80th Ord. Bn., said the two roomed together for roughly a year.

“This really brings back good memories,” he said. “We all used to load ammo together at Camp Dahn and now some of us work in the same area again after all these years.”

Johnson, a Las Vegas native, said he hopes this will be the first of many meetings.

“We are just five guys that came through the ranks together and now we are all back at JBB,” he said.

Cureton said he met with Canada at Fort Hood, Texas, and found out they would deploy to JBB together.

“I ran into Sgt. Maj. Tincknell here at the dining facility and he told me that, ‘Mr. Tadlock was on his way here, and I have spoken to Sgt. First Class Johnson a few times,’” said Cureton.

The experience has been one of the best in his life, said Cureton.

“I plan on retiring when I get back to the states, so it is fitting that they were with me for my first duty station and now we are all here again for my last,” he said.

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--Select “PAO” from the JBB homepage

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The four Rs for a PROductive relationship

Be respectful, real, responsible and responsive



"The Stress Doc"
Mark Gorkin

Many Boomers grew up with an alliterative academic mantra as our educational foundation – the Four Rs – reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic and religion.

Let's just say I focused more on the first two

Rs and sort of made a nominal wave at the latter. For example, I am a self-professed Jewish atheist. Of course, my biggest fear is being accused of redundancy.

However, I continue to make up for slighting this upstanding letter. For example, I prominently share a burnout scenario caution flag in many of my Practice Safe Stress programs. It's called "The Vital Lesson of the Four 'R's": If no matter what you do or how hard you try, results, rewards, recognition and relief are not forthcoming, and you can't say "No" or won't let go, that is, you can't step back and seek a new perspective ... trouble awaits. The groundwork is being laid for apathy, callousness and despair. Especially when overcommitted, I extol this Stress Doc truism: Do know your limits and don't limit your "No"s.

Recently, I designed a new four R mantra. It's called the four Rs for a PROductive – Professional, Reciprocal and Ongoing – Relationship.

Let's first examine the PRO acronym.

By "Professional" I mean there are certain standards and expectations for behavior on the part of both parties.

"Reciprocal" means that, despite different levels of expertise or authority, there is meaningful give and take in the relationship. One party is not perceived to be inherently or psychologically subordinate to the other, despite differences in age, rank, professional standing, etc. Each person has the freedom and choice to speak his or her mind and do so from the heart. Naturally, it may be harder for the "junior" partner in the relationship.

"Ongoing" means this is not a one-time encounter – the relationship has mutual significance as well as a past, present and future.

Now to those Rs. Especially in work-related arenas, to engage others PROductively in our increasingly complex, diverse and wired world, it is necessary to navigate and negotiate emotionally charged, "T 'n T" – time and task-driven – organizational settings and interpersonal situations.

Effective engagement requires blending both high task performance focus and high touch people focus. A good communicator is able to connect with his or her own needs and emotions, goals and hopes. This individual is not afraid to share personal flaws and foibles and then use that connective/collective, head and heart understanding to build relationship bridges

with allies or antagonists.

And a PRO communicator knows the value of injecting some humor. For example, Daniel Goleman, in his groundbreaking work in his book "Emotional Intelligence," found that the best managers used humor three times more often than their less successful counterparts. As I like to say: "People are more open to a serious message when it is gift-wrapped with humor."

So, let's see if I can walk my talk with an en-light-ening argument for PROductive engagement with a four R foundation: Being Respectful, Real, Responsible and Responsive.

The four Rs for a PROductive relationship

Using <http://ardictionary.com>, let's examine the four Rs:

1. Respectful. PROductive relating starts with a capacity to truly take notice; regard with special attention; regard as worthy of special consideration; and, therefore, to care for someone.

This conception goes beyond formality and even civility. The process of relationship building requires mutual interest and investment.

In the context of being a PRO, respect means a willingness to take the time and energy to understand, or at least care about, the other person's experience and world view.

Certainly, one can respectfully disagree. Of course, in the face of an all-knowing, egomaniacal, "You don't seem to realize, I really am as important as I think I am" stress carrier, it can be a challenge to remain respectful.

At these times, I try to quietly recall the words of French novelist, Andre Gide: "One must allow others to be right, it consoles them for not being anything else," which brings us to the second R.

2. Real. A relationship that is real is "true; genuine; not artificial, counterfeit, or facetious;" it also connotes "having substance or capable of being treated as fact," the "real reason." However, your position on an issue doesn't necessarily have to stand up in a court of law to be real.

Sometimes it's a willingness to initially speak from the gut or heart but then be committed to verify, when possible, or to separate fantasy from reality, when desirable. For me, one defining quality of "being or keeping it real" is a willingness to express a belief or take a position that may challenge, disappoint or even anger the other person(s).

The position taken isn't simply defiance for defiance sake. Though I'm a big believer of irony whereby you say one thing but obviously mean the opposite to skewer a position or person who deserves some ego-deflation, or at least needs some help in getting real. For example, the notion of FOX News being "Fair and Balanced" seems to me a wonderful example of unintended irony. And unless you are in a relationship of great power disparity, preserving your sense of self through passive-

aggressive resistance does not meet this standard of being "real." Civil disobedience does, of course, meet this standard.

When you are PROductively "real" you share something that reflects a core belief or value and/or challenge a position that you believe threatens to undermine a climate of respect and authenticity. Ultimately, you affirm your own integrity and honesty in the relationship, whether this involves one other person or the authenticity of a larger group dynamic.

By trumping loyalty with reality, you refuse to be trapped in an asymmetrical "Loyalty Loop": Those who never want you to answer back always want you to back their answer. Clearly, a "real" relationship is "not to be taken (or given) lightly."

3. Responsible. As a PRO, being responsible means "likely to be called upon to answer; to be answerable." It involves "a degree of accountability on the part of the person concerned." You are seen to have impact upon, or are in charge of, a person or situation as an "agent or cause." You are "worthy of or requiring responsibility or trust." Clearly, there is a connection between being responsible and being professional and conscientious, especially regarding one's exercise of decision-making powers.

Conversely, one common example of not being responsible is when a person simply blames another for a problem or for his or her compromised performance. To do this means forsaking your authority, autonomy and accountability – what I call the "Triple A of Personal/Professional Responsibility." Ideally, people should be encouraged to reasonably and ethically exercise their authority and be given sufficient autonomy to do so. At the same time, PRO relating is synonymous with being held accountable by some monitoring process for one's decisions and actions.

In a PROductive relationship, not taking responsibility too frequently means you accept that another party has the power to define your competency, your identity and the problem-solving dynamics of a situation. And from such a vulnerable if not victim-like position, not surprisingly, some people become defensive – too quickly seeing provocative or even mere problematic interaction as an issue of respect.

I think the words of the universally admired former first lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, have much relevance: "No one can take away your self-respect without your active participation."

So, don't be responsible for an unhealthy power transfusion.

4. Responsive. The foundational word for responsive is sensitive – "being susceptible to the attitudes, feelings or circumstances of others."

For me, responsive is the counterpoint to being reactive – where sensitivity has less to do with feeling with and for the other person and more to do with defending an insecure or injured self.

My conception of responsive equates

with a strong capacity for empathy, an ability to walk in another's shoes, and especially a capacity for feeling those bunions.

In contrast, reaction is frequently an overemotional state. And when someone is chronically reactive – think fight or flight on steroids – he or she perceives events as darkly threatening. Often, other people are held in suspicion and are to be quickly attacked or avoided. Reaction has a primal if not primitive quality; responsive is a complex and compassionate blend of head and heart. When you are responsive, you are processing both text and context, seeing both the individual trees and the bigger forest.

At the same time, we must go beyond a psychological perspective. Being responsive means you are "ready or inclined to respond ... to people or events; you show effort in return to a force." You are willing to consider and act upon "suggestions and influences." Yet, the most effective response mechanism does not necessarily involve strategic assertion or a dramatic display of knowledge or authority. Sometimes, being responsive means knowing when and how to ask the right question or when to be silent and simply touch the other person's shoulder.

I hope, with the concepts and case example you now have a four R template for building professional, reciprocal and ongoing relations. Be respectful, real, responsible and responsive both personally and with others and you will be a PROductive communicator. And you'll also be on a four step path for helping everyone "Practice Safe Stress!"

Mark Gorkin, LICSW, "The Stress Doc"™, is an acclaimed keynote and kickoff speaker, training/OD and team building consultant, psychotherapist and "motivational humorist." He is the author of "Practice Safe Stress: Healing and Laughing in the Face of Stress, Burnout & Depression" and "The Four Faces of Anger: Transforming Anger, Rage, and Conflict into Inspiring Attitude & Behavior." A kickoff speaker for Estrin Legal Education Conferences, the Doc is America Online's online psychohumorist™ and pioneer of a USA Today Online "HotSite" – <http://www.stressdoc.com> – recognized as a workplace resource by National Public Radio. For more info on the Doc's speaking and training programs and products, email stressdoc@aol.com or call 301-875-2567.

This issue of the Expeditionary Times contains a reader submitted article written by Mark Gorkin, also known as "The Stress Doc." Gorkin's views are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense and the inclusion of his submission is not meant in any way as an endorsement of his services.

Aviation brigade performs parody of 'It's a Wonderful Life' to send positive message

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. JOHN STIMAC
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Members of Task Force 38, with the 38th Combat Aviation Brigade out of Shelbyville, Ind., put their own spin on the movie "It's a Wonderful Life," addressing suicide while making their audience laugh Dec. 4 at the Freedom chapel at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Lt. Col. Dan Kozlowski, brigade judge advocate with TF 38 and an Indianapolis native, said himself and Col. David Wood, the TF 38 commander, came up with this innovative approach to suicide prevention.

"We both considered the movie to be a favorite," said Kozlowski. "There is a tendency toward depression around the holidays and we wanted to put out a positive message."

Kozlowski said 'It's a Wonderful Deployment' has been in the works for roughly three months.

"There are two big changes that we made to the original," he said. "Our play is based out of a National Guard Armory in Shelbyville, Ind., and most of the characters are military related."

In the movie, George Bailey considered suicide, a choice too many Soldiers have made or considered lately, said Kozlowski.

"Our message is no man is a failure," he said. "Everyone's life has value, and suicide is no answer to life's problems."

Sgt. Andrew J. Schnieders, command executive assistant with TF 38 and a Mooresville, Ind., native, said he was approached to volunteer for this production and was happy to accept because of the message the performance was sending.

Schnieders, who plays the lead



Sgt. Andrew J. Schnieders, command executive assistant with Task Force 38 out of Shelbyville, Ind., and a Mooresville, Ind., native, and Capt. Christina Shepard, logistics officer with TF 38 and Clayton, Ind., native, act out a scene in the military version of "It's a Wonderful Life," titled "It's a Wonderful Deployment." The play ran Dec. 4 through Dec. 5 at Freedom Chapel at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

character George Bailey, said he has never been in a formal stage play with speaking lines, but was a musical actor and toured the United States before joining the military.

"It's a refreshing way to display the problems that can overwhelm Soldiers, which lead to considering suicide," he said.

The production gives Soldiers a chance to reflect on what the lives of their friends and families would be like without them, instead of sitting through a set of power point slides, said Schnieders.

"This play shows that our individual life is important to those around us, most importantly our family and friends," he said. "The timing of this production was specifically geared toward the holiday period."

Schnieders said this issue affects everybody, and military personnel need to be reminded during the holiday season that their lives are valuable.

Staff Sgt. Leeann Hiser, personnel noncommissioned officer with TF 38 and an Alexandria, Ind., native, said she enjoyed the play, and thought it

was funny and put out a good message.

"Everyone is away from home and people get a little sad over the holidays; this brings everybody together, kind of like a family function," said Hiser.

Schnieders said his hope is to create a positive memory for service members' reflection when they go through troubled times during their deployments.

"If we can make a difference in just one person's life, we have done our job," he said.

Infantry Soldiers prep for holidays in Iraq

BY SPC. CORY GROGAN
41ST IBCT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CAMP ADDER, Iraq – Half way around the world, evidence of the holiday season is everywhere.

At Camp Adder, Iraq, where the Oregon National Guard's 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team has nearly a third of its brigade, countless donated holiday greeting cards, trees, decorations, lights, holiday care packages, nativity scenes and even music at the

chapel brought a little bit of the holiday season to service members.

Lt. Col. Jason Schwabel, deputy brigade commander of the 41st IBCT, praised the brigade's decorated Tactical Operations Center.

"You can watch visitors get a smile on their face when they see the decorations put up by Soldiers, and it feels like a little bit of home in our busy operation center," Schwabel said.

Family and friends at home have done their fair share to ensure Oregon Soldiers will not forget about the holidays this year, and it is evident it means a lot to the troops, said Sgt.

Cassandra Krawec-Paul, the administration noncommissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 41st IBCT.

Krawec-Paul, who handles the mail for her unit, said she has seen a tremendous increase in packages for the holiday season.

"It is the amazing the support we're getting – it helps," she said. "You see the smile on every Soldiers face when they get mail, and we have been getting a lot of Christmas stuff from family and people we don't even know. One family even donated a Christmas tree and a gift for each person in our unit."



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

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

Level: Hard

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

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. What Yukon mining district was the site of the 1890s gold rush?
2. What Scandinavian country last fought in a war in 1814?
3. What U.S. city had three of the world's five tallest man-made structures in 1994?
4. What country went metric to join the European community, but kept the pint for use in pubs and for milk?
5. What New York City landmark is the largest movie theater in the U.S.?

1. The Klondike 2. Sweden 3. Chicago 4. Britain 5. Radio City Music Hall

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)

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

INDOOR POOL 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 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. 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 Midgett 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.
EAST FIT-NESS CENTER 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.	8-10 p.m.	EAST RECREATION CENTER 4-ball tourney: Sunday- 8 p.m. 8-ball tourney: Monday- 8 p.m. Karaoke: Monday- 8 p.m. Fri., - 2 a.m., 8 a.m. 2 p.m., 7 p.m., 9 p.m. Table Tennis: Tuesday- 8 p.m. 8-ball tourney: Monday- 8 p.m.	H6 FITNESS CENTER 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.	Monday- Saturday- 4:30 a.m., 4 p.m., 10 p.m., 12 a.m. Soccer: Tue., Thu., - 8 p.m. Wednesday- 8 p.m. MACP Level 1: Friday- 8 p.m. Saturday- 8 p.m.	Wednesday- 8:30 p.m. Thursday- 2 a.m., 8:30 p.m. Karaoke: Thursday- 8:30 p.m. Domingos: Saturday- 8:30 p.m. Darts: Saturday- 8:30 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.
WEST RECREATION CENTER Green Bean Karaoke: Sun., Wed., 7:30pm 9-ball tourney: Monday- 8 p.m.			H6 RECREATION CENTER Bingo: Sunday- 8 p.m. Texas	WEST RECREATION CENTER Karaoke: Sun., Wed., 7:30pm 9-ball tourney: Monday- 8 p.m.	WEST FIT-NESS CENTER 3 on 3 basketball tourney: Saturday- 7:30 p.m. Floor hockey: Mon., Wed., Fri., - 8-10 p.m.	CIRCUIT GYM Floor hockey: Mon., Wed., Fri., - 8-10 p.m.

UPCOMING SPORTS ON AFN



Thursday 12/17/09

Toronto Raptors @ Orlando Magic, Tape Delayed 12 a.m. AFN/sports
 Los Angeles Lakers @ Milwaukee Bucks, Tape Delayed 8 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NBA on TNT: Orlando Magic @ Miami Heat, Live 5 a.m. AFN/xtra

Friday 12/18/09

NBA on TNT: Orlando Magic @ Miami Heat, Tape Delayed 12 a.m. AFN/sports
 Thursday Night Football: Indianapolis Colts @ Jacksonville Jaguars, Tape Delayed 4 a.m. AFN/sports
 Ottawa Senators @ New Jersey Devils, Live 4 p.m. AFN/xtra
 NBA Friday: Los Angeles Clippers @ New York Knicks, Live 5 p.m. AFN/sports
 Washington Capitals @ Vancouver Canucks, Live 7 p.m. AFN/ xtra

Saturday 12/19/09

Utah Jazz @ Atlanta Hawks, Tape Delayed 12 a.m. AFN/sports
 Milwaukee Bucks @ Cleveland Cavaliers, Tape Delayed 4:30 a.m. AFN/sports
 Holiday Hoops - Big 12 Conference Basketball: Michigan @ Kansas, Live 9 a.m. AFN/sports

Sunday 12/20/09

2009 New Mexico Bowl: Teams TBD (University Stadium; Albuquerque, NM), Tape Delayed 12 a.m. AFN/sports
 37th Annual NCAA Football Division III Championship - Championship Game: Teams TBD (Amos Alonzo Stagg Bowl; Salem, VA), Tape Delayed 2 a.m. AFN/xtra
 Saturday Night Football: Dallas Cowboys @ New Orleans Saints, Tape Delayed 4 a.m. AFN/sports
 Atlanta Hawks @ Chicago Bulls, Tape Delayed 7 a.m. AFN/xtra

Monday 12/21/09

Portland Trail Blazers @ Miami Heat, Tape Delayed 12 a.m. AFN/sports
 Sunday Night Football: Minnesota Vikings @ Carolina Panthers, Tape Delayed 4 a.m. AFN/sports
 NHL on VERSUS: Buffalo Sabres @ Toronto Maple Leafs, Live 4 p.m. AFN/xtra
 Monday Night Football: New York Giants @ Washington Redskins, Live 5:30 p.m. AFN/sports

Tuesday 12/22/09

Cleveland Cavaliers @ Phoenix Suns, Tape Delayed 12 a.m. AFN/sports
 2009 MAACO Las Vegas Bowl: Teams TBD (Sam Boyd Stadium; Las Vegas, NV), Live 5 p.m. AFN/sports
 NHL on VERSUS: San Jose Sharks @ Chicago Blackhawks, Live 5 p.m. AFN/xtra

Wednesday 12/23/09

Holiday Hoops, Big 12 Conference Basketball: Michigan State @ Kansas, Tape Delayed 2 a.m. AFN/sports
 Houston Rockets @ Orlando Magic, Live 4 p.m. AFN/xtra
 Cleveland Cavaliers @ Sacramento Kings, Live 7 p.m. AFN/ xtra

Arts & Entertainment

'Phrazes for the Young' not bad, but not great

BY SGT. KEITH S. VAN KLOMPENBERG
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



"Phrazes for the Young" is the latest in a string of side projects from members of The Strokes, one of the most famous indie-rock bands in the world. The band has been on hiatus since its 2006 release, "First Impressions of Earth," and the band members have seemed to keep busy with solo projects and bands on the side.

Julian Casablancas wrote all the music and lyrics and performed most of the instrumentation on this album. Until a few weeks ago, when I happened to read an article on the recording of The Strokes debut album, the uber-hit, "Is This It," I had no idea

Casablancas was even a musician. I had always figured him to be a frontman and singer, and nothing else. It turns out that he was actually composing all The Strokes music and teaching the band members their parts.

The density of the tracks themselves sharply contrasted "Is This It," which was extremely gritty and stripped down, and also a megahit that catapulted the band to superstardom.

The next two releases were progressively more produced, and each sold fewer copies than the last.

This makes me wonder why Casablancas decided to go even further with production and layers than any of those albums.

Last year, The Strokes' drummer, Fabrizio Moretti, released a self-titled album with his new band, Little Joy. The album was gritty and underpro-

duced, along the lines of "Is This It," and sat on the top of many top-10 lists for best alternative albums of the year.

It seems to me there's a formula that works for these guys and Casablancas is fighting it every step of the way.

That being said, I like this album. I don't love it, but I like it; kind of. I really like Casablancas' voice and I respect him more as an artist now that I know more about his abilities as a musician. But the album is too glossy and synthetic for me. Guitars, banjos and drums all sound digital to me.

Banjo? That's right, he's gone robot country. It's an '80s synthfest from start to finish, but it's pretty fun, even for a guy like me who prefers the old Strokes sound.

The first track, "Out of the Blue," is my personal favorite with its 10 or

so double-stroked guitars and Casio drums. In that song, when Casablancas sings, "Yes, I know I'm going to hell in a leather jacket," I can't help but smile.

The worst track is "Ludlow St." It's too long, too fake sounding and too uninteresting. Casablancas is singing about the problems with his favorite neighborhood in ever-changing Manhattan, but I just don't buy it. Maybe it would work as a two-minute piece, but it comes in at 5:45.

That's another problem with this album, the length. It's only eight tracks long, but it really drags. If you're not Stephen Malkmus or Doug Martsch, I don't want to hear your six-minute songs.

Little Joy is amazing, Albert Hammond Jr.'s solo album is good, and this one is OK. It's fun but too fake.

'Old Dogs' needs to be put to sleep, fast

BY SGT. JAYSON A. HOFFMAN
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



"Old Dogs" is aimed at children and older adults, but this film was uninspired and not funny. Someone forgot to

tell Disney that family films, in recent years, have become funny, witty and filled with multi-layered characters.

Don't waste your time on this when you could watch Robin Williams interacting with children and actually being funny in "Mrs. Doubtfire."

The story revolves around Charlie (John Travolta) and Dan (Robin Wil-

liams), two business partners about to strike the deal of a lifetime.

Then Dan's old fling, and ex-wife, shows up and introduces him to the twin son and daughter he never knew he had.

Unintelligent, terrible slapstick antics ensue as Dan attempts to get to know his children with the help of his best friend Charlie.

My personal favorite part of this movie was the beginning when I was so focused on my delicious movie theater hot dog and nachos that I hardly recognized the fact that a movie was playing. Figuring out how to scoop up all that nacho cheese with a limited amount of tortilla chips proved much

more interesting than this film.

The other part of this movie I thoroughly enjoyed was the man sitting directly behind me in the theater. I'm sure his review would read much different from mine. If I were to guess, based purely off his nonstop bellowing laughter, this was the funniest movie he had ever seen.

I'm still struggling to comprehend what exactly it was that made him laugh so hard, but he made this movie tolerable for me. I'm quite ashamed I did not interview him for this review, but I would at least like to publicly thank him for making this waste of time tolerable.

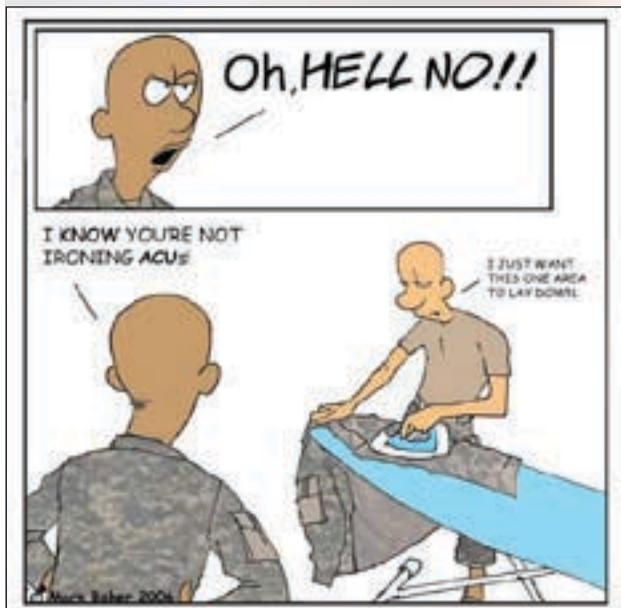
Travolta ("Grease") and Williams

("Good Morning Vietnam") were terrible. The script they were working with didn't help any, but Travolta was way too over the top and Williams played one of his most subdued characters to date.

I had no intention of seeing this movie. It was even worse than it looked, but the five percent approval rating on <http://www.rottentomatoes.com> made me think that I could be taking part in history.

That is by far the lowest rating I have ever seen on the Web site, and just so everyone knows, the rating is misleading. I have no idea how it made it as high as five percent. Do yourselves a favor and never, ever waste your time with this movie.

PVT MURPHY



Sustainer Reel Time Theater

Wednesday, Dec. 16

5 p.m. Saw VI
8 p.m. Armored

Thursday, Dec. 17

5 p.m. Armored
8 p.m. Law Abiding Citizen

Friday, Dec. 18

2 p.m. The Box
5 p.m. Invictus
8:30 p.m. The Princess and the Frog

Saturday, Dec. 19

2 p.m. Michael Jackson's This Is It
5 p.m. The Princess and the Frog
8 p.m. Invictus

Sunday, Dec. 20

2 p.m. The Princess and the Frog
5 p.m. Invictus
8 p.m. A Christmas Carol

Monday, Dec. 21

5 p.m. The Box
8 p.m. The Princess and the Frog

Tuesday, Dec. 22

5 p.m. Invictus
8 p.m. Michael Jackson's This Is It

Wednesday, Dec. 23

5 p.m. A Christmas Carol
8 p.m. The Box



PHOTOS AROUND IRAQ



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Michael Wykes

U.S. Soldiers with A Company, 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, and members of the Sons of Iraq, perform a night patrol Nov. 11 in Al Muradiyah, near Baghdad, Iraq.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Zimmerman

An Iraqi Soldier from the Iraqi 1st Army Division, speeds toward the finish line in front of a U.S. Marine, with the 1st Iraqi Army Military Transition Team, after running a joint 5K race Nov. 3 at Camp Fallujah, in western Iraq.



An Iraqi Soldier with the help of U.S. Soldiers assigned to E Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, sets charges to detonate unexploded ordnance Oct. 27 in Gaines Mills, Iraq.

U.S. Army photo by Spc. Gavriel Bar-Tzur



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Ernest E. Sivia III

Local children watch as U.S. Soldiers from the 7th Engineering Battalion, 194th Engineering Brigade, arrive Nov. 14 in Gharraf, Dhi Qar, Iraq. The engineers conducted safety inspections at a local school.



A reed gatherer has his haul inspected at a check point on the river by an Iraqi Soldier with the Department of Border Enforcement Nov. 14, during a visit to Joint Security Station Um Sa'ah, in southern Iraq. The visit was part of a reconnaissance of the area to see how members of the Department of Border Enforcement deal with the issue of contraband smuggled into Iraq from Iran.

NEWS AROUND IRAQ

Coalition forces work with Iraqi government to prosecute detainees for terrorism

BAGHDAD – Task Force 134 presented its 300th terrorism case for 2009 to the Central Criminal Court of Iraq.

Of the 309 cases presented to the CCC-I so far, 122 defendants have been convicted. The remaining defendants will be pursued for other crimes against the Iraqi people or released according to the Security Agreement between the United States and the Government of Iraq.

“As part of Task Force 134, the Central Criminal Court of Iraq Liaison Office is responsible for ensuring that detainees in U.S. custody receive due process through the Iraqi Court system,” said Navy Capt. Kenneth O’Rourke, Task Force 134 legal adviser.

In 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority set up the CCC-I as a national court to allow the Iraqi government to prosecute those suspected of terrorism. Since its inception, more than 2,100 defendants have been convicted of various crimes.

“The cases appearing before the court are increasingly complicated and involve individuals who have committed some of the most violent attacks against the Iraqi population and coalition soldiers,” O’Rourke said. “The prosecution of these dangerous detainees has caused a general slowing in the pace of trials when compared to previous years.”

Attorneys are spending preparing cases and working with their Iraqi colleagues to ensure the quality of evidence put forward to the court. This process has come to increasingly involve the use of forensic evidence.

“In the Iraqi legal system, traditionally two witnesses to a crime are required to testify before the defendant can be convicted, while forensic evidence is a new concept in Iraqi courts and the judges have come to appreciate its value and increasingly accepting it in support of prosecution,” O’Rourke said.

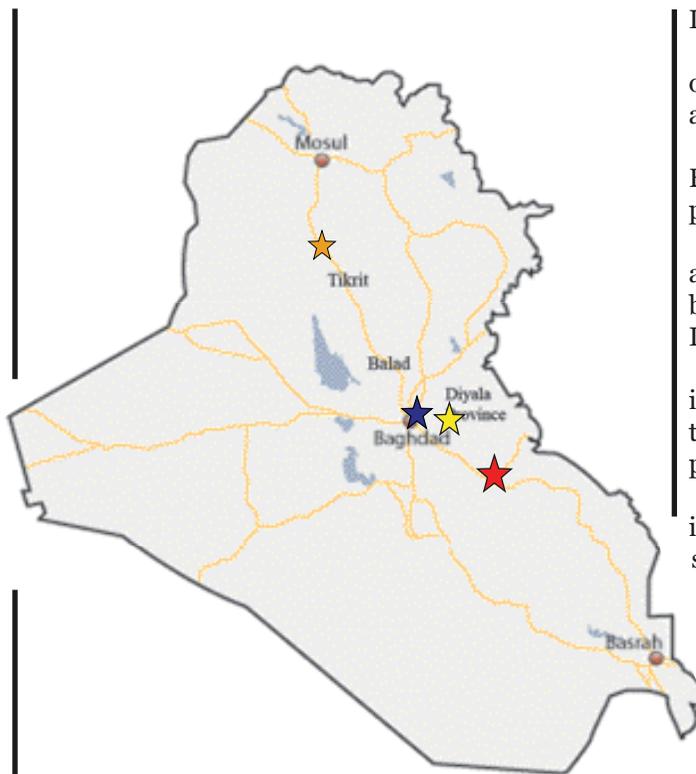
“Recently, we were successful in securing convictions of two defendants, based solely on forensic evidence. A forensic expert testified against both defendants. He confirmed that improvised explosive devices found in the case of each defendant was recovered by coalition forces and then processed by his lab.”

The lab confirmed the presence of the defendants’ fingerprints on electrical tape used in the explosive device. At trial, the prosecutor recommended convicting both defendants based on the report and the live testimony of the witness. Both defendants were convicted.

The legal team has also worked to motivate the Iraqi people and criminal justice system to take a more active role in supporting the prosecution of suspected terrorists.

In June 2009, two local national civilians voluntarily provided eye-witness testimony to an Iraqi investigative judge against a defendant who was allegedly selling hand grenades by the crate.

“The eye-witness testimony resulted in the issuance of an arrest warrant for this terrorist from the



investigative judge,” O’Rourke said. “Iraqi security forces executed the warrant and arrested the terrorist in early July 2009. During the search of the terrorist’s garden, they discovered several crates of RKG-3 grenades that were awaiting sale.”

Iraqi forces then testified in front of the same investigative judge as to what they captured from the alleged terrorist. The combination of the testimony from four Iraqis and the pictures they took of the weapons cache led to a conviction and 15-year sentence.

“The willingness of these Iraqis to step forward has furthered the Rule of Law in Iraq and no doubt saved innocent lives, both American and Iraqi,” O’Rourke said. “These cases were possible because, over the past six years, Central Criminal Court of Iraq Liaison Office has worked to develop relationships that allow the court to take the law in new directions and to offer the Iraqi people a chance to take ownership in their judicial process.”

Iraqi Security Forces arrest suspected assassination accomplices

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Security Forces arrested 10 individuals Dec. 3 and Dec. 4 during five joint security operations in northern Iraq in search of suspected terrorists involved in crimes such as assassinations and bombings of civilians and security forces in Iraq.

In southwestern Mosul Dec. 3 Iraqi Security Forces and U.S. advisers searched a residential building for a suspected al-Qaeda in Iraq member allegedly involved in assassinations and vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attacks throughout the region.

The suspect is an alleged V-BIED and assassination cell leader of northern Mosul, believed to be conspiring with senior AQI leaders to plan attacks against

Iraqi civilians and security forces.

After preliminary questioning and an investigation of the premises, ISF arrested the AQI suspect and two alleged criminal accomplices without incident.

During a second security operation Dec. 3, the 3rd Brigade, 1st Division Iraqi Army arrested three suspected terrorists.

The Iraqi Army unit and U.S. advisers conducted a traffic stop on a public road in southwestern Mosul based on intelligence that an AQI leader for northern Iraq was riding within the vehicle.

After questioning those within the vehicle and an initial investigation, Iraqi Army Soldiers arrested three individuals suspected of being criminal accomplices of the alleged AQI leader.

In a separate security operation conducted Dec. 4 in Ad Dawr, northwest of Baghdad, ISF arrested two suspected terrorists and discovered bomb-making material.

ISF and U.S. advisers searched buildings for a suspected terrorist who has allegedly been involved in staging IED attacks against security forces in Iraq.

The security team discovered possible bomb-making material, including three drums of diesel fuel and 15 bags of urea fertilizer on the premises.

Based on the discovered evidence and questioning conducted on the premises, ISF arrested two suspected criminal accomplices to the suspect.

In a second joint security operation conducted today, Iraqi Police arrested a suspected terrorist in Balad Ruz, northeast of Baghdad.

ISF and U.S. advisers searched buildings for a suspected AQI member who is believed to have ties with AQI senior leadership.

Evidence collected at the scene led the Iraqi Police to arrest a suspected criminal accomplice of the alleged AQI associate.

During a third security operation conducted today, ISF and U.S. advisers searched two buildings for a suspected AQI member who is believed to facilitate IED attacks throughout the Euphrates River Valley.

The ISF found and arrested the warranted individual without incident.

Ministry of Defence reopens upgraded Joint Operations Center

BAGHDAD – Ministry of Defence officials reopened the Joint Operations Center with state of the art tracking systems and monitors Dec. 1 after a lengthy refurbishment in Baghdad.

Minister of Defense Abdul Qader Mohammad Jassim cut the ceremonial ribbon on the portal of the new center, marking the grand reopening of the JOC. The future of Iraq depends on the strength of its security, he said.

The MoD band played as military officials from NATO and U.S. forces mingled with Iraqi military leaders on the main floor of the JOC. One U.S. officer said the opening of the JOC will result in an improved flow of information between the tactical forces on the street that carry out the tasks and the strategic level decision makers at MOD.

“This gives the military and police on the ground the upper hand, but they can’t do it without the reports and support of the Iraqi people,” said MoD liaison Lt. Cmdr. Michael P. Desmond.

Kindergarteners lined the walls of the hallway leading to the JOC waving small Iraqi flags. As Jassim passed the children, he stopped and smiled as a small boy delivered a poem about the strength of Iraq. Jassim noted the importance of the children to Iraq in his speech to the attendees.

“It is (because of) these flowers of Iraq that we must secure Iraq’s future,” he said.

The fully networked JOC can accommodate several dozen people and is outfitted with an array of geo-political maps and video monitors along its walls. Core personnel of a standard watch team are each responsible for monitoring a particular facet of military operations.

The JOC operates around the clock and features a 24-hour hotline for incoming tips from the people.

“The hotline is for every citizen of Iraq to call us and report suspicious persons,” said Staff Maj. Gen. Hisham, military movement director. “Through this hotline we have intercepted and averted many violent terrorist acts.”

November has had the fewest reported acts of terrorism since the U.S. entered Iraq in 2003.

NATO Training Mission – Iraq Deputy Commander, Italian Maj. Gen. Giuseppe Spinelli expressed his confidence in the Iraqi mission and said the future of Iraq is now in the hands of the Iraqi people.

Iraqi corrections officers take aim at less-than-lethal range

 BAGHDAD – Iraqi corrections officers began participating in a series of familiarization and retraining classes on the less-than-lethal shotgun ranges Dec. 3 at Camp Cropper, Iraq.

They fired the Mossberg 500, a pump-action shotgun with 10 to 12 rubber, torpedo-shaped point rounds, at point targets 25 meters away to refresh what they learned at the Iraqi Correctional Training Center for detention operations at Contingency Operating Location Future, Iraq.

The ICOs received classroom training that goes hand-in-hand with the range and theater internment facility procedures.

“The ICOs received a two-hour block of instruction on the use and capabilities of non-lethal weapons and the rules on the use of force,” said Sgt. 1st Class Steven Noreika, 192nd Military Police Battalion ICO integration noncommissioned officer in charge. “The compound guard force also helps train the ICOs while on duty.”

“They have to know when they can and cannot use the non-lethal force of the shotgun and the whole escalation of force is a process they have to go through.”

To complete the training, the ICOs must reach a standard equivalent to that of the U.S. forces that use the weapon.

“The standard is being able to have the ability to utilize the weapon system properly and safely, to understand what its capabilities are and to understand the rules of engagement (and) rules of force,” said Sgt. 1st Class Dan Kelley, B Company, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment, immediate reaction force NCOIC.

ICOs working with the IRF led and advised their comrades during the range.

“They’re awesome,” Kelley said. “We have very good groups of guys that are a select few out of the other ICOs.”

“They did extensive training with our guys. (The ICOs) go through the same extent of training, giving classes to

us, making sure they know all the weapons systems that are utilized and how they are utilized, to ensure that they properly teach the other ICOs.”

All training the ICOs receive, whether it is on a range or on the job, brings the Camp Cropper TIF one step closer to being ready for its eventual turnover to the Government of Iraq.

“We’re trying to get up to the standard of performance equivalent to a U.S. guard force member,” said Lt. Col. Eric Mullai, 192nd MP Bn. commander. “This gives them the opportunity to use some of the equipment that we use and become familiar with it so they can use it when they do take over.”

ICOs took refresher courses on other weapons and will begin more situation-based training in early 2010.

“We ran an FN 303 range in August and a taser range for 88 ICOs in September,” Noreika said.

The FN 303 is a semi-automatic weapon that uses paintball rounds for marking purposes.

“Next up for retraining is riot control,” Noreika said. “We are hoping to kick that off in January.”

Iraq commits to border security with surveillance purchase

 BAGHDAD – The Iraqi Ministry of Interior initiated the \$49 million purchase of a border surveillance system that provides coverage for large portions of Iraq’s borders with Syria and Iran from the United States Nov. 28.

When the system becomes operational in June 2010, Iraqi border police will be monitoring activity along 286 kilometers of Iraq’s Syrian border and 402 kilometers of its border with Iran.

The MoI border committee evaluated multiple border surveillance systems from various nations. It recommended the Interior minister select this system because of the transparent purchase process and its long-term sustainment capabilities. The Iraqi Security Assistance Mission, Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq is working closely with the MoI to facilitate the purchase process.

The surveillance system provides towers with cameras, infra-red sensors and communication relays to alert a regional command center of border intrusions. The scalable system can be upgraded to include additional sensors, such as radars or high-fidelity cameras. Its modular design allows an increase in its effective area of coverage. It is also capable of communicating information to a central headquarters for assessment.

U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Michael Barbero, MNSTC-I commanding general, said, “Iraq is taking a critical step forward in its efforts to protect its borders from external threats. Combined with other improvements to its border security, the investment in this system significantly enhances security for the people of Iraq.”

Soldiers aid 7 Iraqis after store explosion

 CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION SPEICHER, Iraq – Four Iraqi police and an Iraqi civilian were killed and 21 Iraqi people were injured after an explosion in a Tikrit store Dec. 4.

The Iraqi Joint Coordination Center reported the explosion to nearby U.S. forces and requested medical support and assistance with security on the scene.

In response, two 25th Combat Aviation Brigade OH-58D Kiowa helicopters were dispatched to provide security during casualty evacuation.

Fourth Brigade, 1st Infantry Division Soldiers, from nearby COL Speicher, responded to the scene to provide additional security and immediate medical assistance to the Iraqi people.

Injured Iraqis were evacuated to Tikrit Hospital, COL Speicher and Joint Base Balad, Iraq, for treatment. The condition of the injured is unknown at this time.

“We regret this tragic loss of life and are standing by to assist the Iraqi Security Forces as they investigate this attack,” said Col. Thomas James, chief of staff with Multi-National Division – North.

Iraqi Security Forces have taken the lead in the investigation.

Iraqi Army Soldiers graduate Iraqi Army Bomb Disposal School courses

 BESMAYA, Iraq – The bomb disposal school at the Besmaya training center graduated 49 Iraqi Army engineer officers from its officer leadership course and 12 Iraqi Army students from the bomb disposal school training course Nov. 26.

The nine-week leadership course included an overview of bomb disposal training as part of more than 240 hours of classroom training. Students also completed practical exercises learning how to plan missions, conduct pre-combat checks and inspections, medical evacuation procedures and other critical leadership tasks.

The seven-week bomb disposal course included training on identification of improvised explosive devices and their components, how IEDs function and procedures used to defeat them. Students completed more than 228 hours of classroom and practical exercise training as they learned basic techniques for collection of forensic evidence, post blast procedures, vehicle clearance and robot operations.

The graduation ceremonies were led by Iraqi Army Col. Jasim Mohammed Sinky, bomb disposal school commandant. Select graduates from the leadership course will be assigned to an Iraqi Army bomb disposal company for 6 months before returning to the school for formal level three and four training.

Al Kut Police Training Center graduates 120 basic recruits

 AL KUT, Iraq – Al Kut Police Training Center graduated 100 oil and 20 national information and investigation police from a basic recruit class Nov. 25.

The training, which began Sept. 28, emphasized policing that considers ethics, human rights, diversity awareness and gender issues. Training during subsequent weeks was devoted to the various aspects of police operations, with the final two weeks reserved for practical use of police weapons.

Upon completion of the final exercise, Iraqi Police Lt. Col. Loay Naji Kadhum, training center acting dean, said he was pleased with the overall performance of the students and that he expected them to serve the Iraqi people well.

These particular students will bring what they learned to their respective assignments throughout Wasit Province. The training center continues to be a vital link in Iraq’s efforts to build a capable and professional defense force.

Phantom Support



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Murray Shugars

Sgt. Oleria Robertson, a heavy vehicle driver with the 396th Transportation Co., 260th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Fayetteville, N.C., native, changes a spare tire on her palletized loading system trailer, during no-move day training. The 396th Trans. Co. uses all no-move days to train and evaluate Soldiers' common task proficiency to ensure safety and mission success on the roads of Iraq.



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Murray Shugars

Staff Sgt. Michael Chastain, a career counselor with the 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a St. Cloud, Minn., native takes time to teach shower, laundry and clothing repair specialists, Spc. Edwin Perez, a Perris, Calif., native, and Spc. Anthony Dorsy, a St. Fredericktown, Mo., native, and members of the 488th Quartermaster Company, 541st CSSB, the proper way to fold the United States flag.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Anita VanderMolen

Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky Elcan the senior enlisted adviser to the 620th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a St. Louis native, shakes hands with Dennis McCarthy, the assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs. McCarthy was in Iraq to speak with Reserve and National Guard Soldiers about issues they may face during their deployment.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Kimberly Calkins

Col. C.J. Read, the commander of the 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Layton, Utah native, dedicates the first Heavy Equipment Transport Vehicle to come out of the maintenance program of the 1st Maintenance Company, 260th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sust. Bde., 13th ESC, by breaking a glass bottle on the bumper of the vehicle. The mechanics with the 1st Maintenance Company established an extensive maintenance and service program to improve the maintenance posture of these heavy vehicles, ensuring that they are fully mission-capable to support logistical efforts throughout Iraq.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Kimberly Calkins

Capt. Stephen R. Spulick, commander of the 8th Medical Logistics Company and a Biddeford, Maine, native, cases the unit flag in a transfer of authority ceremony at Morale, Welfare and Recreation center east Nov. 27 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.