

The Expeditionary Times

Proudly serving the finest Expeditionary service members throughout Iraq

Vol. 3 Issue 5

December 23, 2009

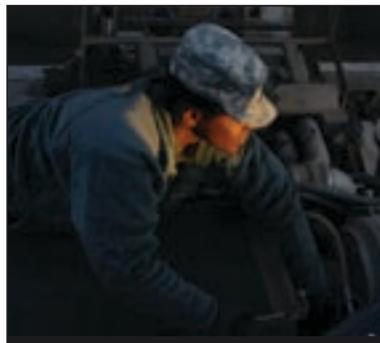
<http://www.hood.army.mil/13sce/>

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Congressmen bring taste of home to troops



Rep. Gene Taylor, a Democrat representing Mississippi's 4th District, talks about the situation in Iraq with Col. Gary Toney, the chief of staff with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and Command Sgt. Maj. Mark D. Joseph, the senior noncommissioned officer with the 13th ESC, Dec. 14 during a visit to Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Five congressmen, from Mississippi, Minnesota, Iowa, Florida and Kentucky, brought gumbo, served lunch and visited with their constituents.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC. NAVEED ALI SHAH
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Holiday celebrations generally include family and friends, but for troops in Iraq, homesickness can put a damper on the joy.

So, like a big family, the Soldiers with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) gathered around the authentic Mississippi gumbo brought by five of their congressional representatives Dec. 14 here at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, to enjoy a little taste of home for the holidays.

The congressmen shipped 1,400 pounds of shrimp and 150 gallons of authentic Mississippi gumbo mix for the troops to enjoy during their visit, said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Mark Sutton, a food services technician with the 13th ESC.

SEE GUMBO ON PAGE 4

Al Warka bank opens at JBB

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. RYAN TWIST
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Contractors and Iraqi entrepreneurs at Joint Base Balad, Iraq gained access to the Al Warka Bank, following the opening of a branch Dec. 17 at the Iraqi Free Zone here.

"The importance of today can't be understated," said Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, commanding general of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) out of Fort Hood, Texas. "This is the first Iraqi bank to be opened on an American base. We're thrilled that they've chosen Joint Base Bal-

ad to open another branch."

Wentz said the bank opening is an important symbol for the independence and sovereignty of Iraq, as well as the growth and stability of the institution.

The Al Warka Bank is one of the largest financial institutions in Iraq, with 120 branches and 350 ATMs located throughout the country, said Maj. David M. Foster, the officer in charge of the Iraq-Based Industrial Zone, with the 13th ESC.

The bank is considered by the Central Bank of Iraq to be the first private bank in Iraq and was established in 1999, he said.

"It feels real good to finally get the bank done," said Foster, a Newport Beach, Calif.,

native. "The process has taken almost two years."

Said Saleh Mohammed, the regional manager of Al Warka Bank for the Salah ad Din province, said through an interpreter if contractors or Iraqi entrepreneurs open an account at this branch, it is just like opening an account at any other branch in Iraq.

"We are so glad to open another branch here at JBB, because we are going to have all the contractors and local nationals invest at the bank to make it easy for them," he said.

Mohammed, who works at the Iraqi Bazaar and prefers to go by his first name, said through an interpreter he is happy about the bank opening because it is a good way

for Iraq to begin replacing American currency with Iraqi money.

Mohammed also said he likes the ATM, as it allows them easier access to their money. The debit card the bank provides can be used throughout Iraq and helps business because the Iraqi Bazaar will start accepting them as well, he said.

Foster said the banks are fee-based, offering services such as foreign currency exchange, money wiring, letters of credit, electronic funds transfers, and savings and checking accounts.

He said the bank will provide services to Iraqis who work at JBB who may not have access to them in their local
SEE BANK ON PAGE 5

Balad Blotter

December 10 - December 15

HOUSEBREAKING:

A victim radioed the Law Enforcement Desk via call box nine and reported a larceny had occurred at the location. A patrol was briefed and dispatched to scene and made contact with the victim. The patrol verified damage to the room before escorting the victim to the Law Enforcement Desk to complete an Air Force IMT 1168/Statement of Suspect/Witness/Complainant. The patrol remained at the location for crime scene integrity. The victim said via AF IMT 1168 that, Dec. 12 at 11 a.m., he departed his living quarters and secured his room. The victim said he returned Dec. 13 at 2 a.m. and noticed damage to his room and property missing. The victim valued property loss at \$4,524. The victim was issued a Department of Defense Form 2701/Victim Witness Assistance Program pamphlet.

PROVOKING SPEECH, GESTURES ASSAULT:

A complainant and witness entered the Law Enforcement Desk and reported an assault had occurred at a location. The complainant said, via Air Force IMT 1168, he was en route to the dining facility when he cut through the M pod of H-1, because it was a shorter distance. As he and the witness walked through the housing area, the subject confronted him and proceeded to push him backward. The complainant said he tried to walk around the subject to avoid confrontation, but the subject kept walking in front of him and continuously pushed him. The complainant further said he felt threatened when the subject said "I have something for you. Come on walk through here and see what happens." The witness' statement corroborated with the complainant's statement with the exception of the fact the subject pushed the complainant on the ground close to a T-wall. The subject was read his Article 31 rights via AF IMT 1168 and declined to make a statement without a lawyer present. The subject was released to a supervisor via Department of Defense Form 2708.

INDECENT ACT:

A complainant telephoned the Law Enforcement Desk and reported an indecent act had occurred at the location. The victim said via Air Force IMT 1168 she was preparing to enter the shower when she heard someone enter the facility. She looked and noticed it was a male. A few seconds later, the subject opened the curtain that separates the showers from the sinks and looked in. She said he left the shower area and lingered around the sink area and then finally left the facility. The witness statement corroborated with victim's statement. The subject was located at the Green Bean in the passenger terminal. A patrol initiated transport of the subject to Bldg. 7168/Eagles Nest for further questioning. The subject was advised of his rights IAW Article 31/UCMJ via AF Form 1168. Subject acknowledged his rights, declined legal counsel and accomplished a written statement. The subject said he accidentally entered the female latrine, when a female told him he was in the wrong shower, he departed the facility. Because the subject was transient, with no military unit located at JBB, he was released on his own recognition.

NIPR: 443-8602

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Mental Health: what do you want from me?

By CAPT. STEVE BRASINGTON
COMBAT STRESS CONTROL PSYCHIATRIST



Satisfying relationships requires sound communication skills.

Let us run through a quick check. When you talk to your significant other, does the tone of your voice soften or harden? After you end the conversation, is your frustration level higher or lower?

Combat Stress offers a class on effective communication. Follow along as I review the critical principles of effective communication.

First, be clear about what you want. Use "I statements." Instead of saying, "Shut up and listen to me," say, "When I'm interrupted, it feels like what I'm saying isn't important" or "When I'm not allowed to finish, I get the idea my opinion doesn't matter." By using these I statements, the risk of moving the conversation into an argument drops because you refrain from placing blame.

These I statements allow you to seek clarification without raising defenses. You are simply stating your feelings, not building a case against an opponent.

Stating your viewpoint can actually help the other person see the situation from your vantage point. Is this not what we want? We want the other person to understand us. We want the other person to appreciate what it is like for us.

Sometimes we expect the person we love to just know. Most of the time, he or she will not know unless we tell him or her. So, check your unrealistic expectations. If you are separated by thousands of miles, invest time and energy into understanding the situation.

Second, seek understanding. Repeat back what you think you have heard. For instance, use a calm tone to ask, "If I understand you correctly, \$1,000 was moved out of checking into a certificate of deposit; is that the

reason \$1,000 is missing from our joint checking account?"

Get the facts straight. Take your time. Do not jump to conclusions. When you assume the worst, you damage trust. Challenge your assumptions and readily admit your errors. For example, "I admit, when I saw \$1,000 missing from our account, I assumed you spent it, dear." You could follow with, "I made a mistake; I should recognize how hard you're working to meet our financial goals."

Third, don't stop yet. Admitting you were wrong was a strong step in the direction of healing a rift. Now, try these three powerful words: "You were right." For advanced work combine the two: "I was wrong, you are right."

I know for some of you, these words are as hard to say as "I love you." Three little words can change hearts. Let us practice the technique during our daily conversations so, when the time comes for conversation with our loved ones, it rings true. Try this one. "You know Joe, I need to admit, you were right the other day you said, 'so and so;' I made a mistake." Check it out. See what happens to your communication patterns.

Good communication decreases day to day stress. Communication is part of a strong foundation for enjoying positive relationships. No matter who you are, you can always improve the effectiveness of your communication.

For more advanced training and discussion, see your Combat Stress Control Prevention Team.

Our prevention team offers other classes for your benefit. We offer skill building in the following areas: Working as a Team, Sleep Hygiene, Stress Management, Anger Management and Suicide Awareness. Our goal is to prevent psychological problems and to increase your resiliency. I hope you stop by to see us soon.



EXPEDITIONARY TIMES

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Expeditionary Times is a command information newspaper in accordance with Army Regulation 360-1 and reviewed by the ESC G2 for security purposes.

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

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155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing
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For online publication visit:
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13th ESC Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz

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: Army language policy

By Lt. Col. Kyle D. Peterson
13th ESC Detailed Inspector General



The Army gains strength and a desirable skill set from Soldiers who are multi-lingual.

Soldiers who are proficient in more than one language possess a valuable skill especially when used appropriately.

The Army trains linguists and provides incentives for Soldiers in certain specialties to attain proficiency in different languages.

The Army provides guidance on the use of language in Army Regulation 600-20 para 4-13 and the Army language policy states:

“English is the operational language of the Army. Soldiers must maintain sufficient proficiency in English to perform their military duties. Their operational communications must be

understood by everyone who has an official need to know their content and, therefore, must normally be in English.

However, commanders may not require Soldiers to use English unless such use is clearly necessary and proper for the performance of military functions. Accordingly, commanders may not require the use of English for personal communications that are unrelated to military functions.”

The Army language policy provides guidance and establishes English as the operational language. It does not cover politeness or courtesy.

In general most people want to understand one another. Ensuring those around us can understand and participate in our conversations will help to avoid confusion and misunderstanding.

No matter the language, good taste and decorum should always be encouraged.

Corrections

The Expeditionary Times regrets these errors:

In the Dec. 16 edition of the Expeditionary Times, the cutline with the photo in the story “Course teaches quick reaction to attacks” should have said, “Master Sgt. Floyd Pringle, non-commissioned officer in charge of support operations with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 751st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Columbia, S.C., native, gives the thumbs up to indicate he has properly sealed his mask during chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear training.”

In the Dec. 16 edition of the Expeditionary Times, the story “Course teaches quick reaction to attacks” should have said, “Capt. Misty Aycock, the administrative personnel officer with the 751st CSSB and a Columbia, S.C., native, said she found the training informative.”

Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

From the Joint Base Balad Sexual Assault Response Coordinator Team: Consent is a choice in which an individual agrees by free will to engage in sexual acts. The fact that a person is in a relationship or was in a relationship does not mean the person automatically consents to sexual activity. Your JBB SARC team is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the JBB 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.

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Maj. Jeffrey Copek
Al Asad (96th SB):
DSN 440-7049
Sgt. 1st Class Tamera Wynn

Interested in
a movie?

Check the movie
schedule on Page 20

The Dirty Dozen

- o Lack of Crew Coordination
- o Complacency
- o Distraction
- o Exceeding Your Limitations/Abilities
- o Indiscipline
- o Fatigue
- o Stress
- o Peer Pressure
- o Lack of Knowledge
- o Lack of Training
- o Lack of Leader Involvement
- o Lack of Pre-mission Planning

Chaplain's Corner: serving God, country with little actions

By Capt. Ulise Mataafa
13th ESC Operations Chaplain



Someone once said you never trip over mountains; it is the pebbles that cause us to stumble in life.

Luke 16:10-12: “If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? And if you are not faithful with other people's things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?”

One of the unavoidable living realities for being an occupant of a JBB containerize housing unit is the accumulation of dust everywhere within a day or two all over inside the living quarter. The bedding needs to cover with the poncho liner. The computer, TV, desk and furniture that have gotten dirty need to be dusted more frequently. The air conditioning

unit filter needs to be cleaned every so often.

I learned it in the hard way after the AC unit stops working for a week from dust build up on the coolant veins. The housing contractor that came to fix the AC unit pointed out that the filter needs to be cleaned once or twice a week in order to keep the AC unit working all the time.

Keeping the living quarter clean may seem less important in comparison with the tactical sophisticated combat life of service members and civilian contractors.

However, little actions such as changing the AC filter, sweeping the floor, dusting the furniture and covering the bedding with the poncho liner bring durability and sustainability to the physical health and the emotional wellbeing of the military personnel to endure lengthy deployment at JBB.

Just as it is true that little actions are important for the physical wellbeing of the Soldiers, it is also true for spiritual resiliency.

Spiritual resiliency is the ability of the Soldier to bounce back from traumatic events such as losing a battle buddy, death of the loved one, divorcing a spouse, losing body mobility or capability, and financial loss. Those examples could destroy Soldiers' inner strength to thrive spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and socially.

The secret of spiritual resiliency is to be faithful with little actions such as prayer, devotion, fellowship, meditation, self-reflection and praises. These little actions are required elements to spiritual resiliency.

Soldiers who faithfully pray, make time for devotions through reading inspiring materials, meditating on moral principles, that the Army values uphold, in the light of their faith tradition are proven to be far more resilient, thriving through a traumatic event they have been through.

On many occasions after consoling Soldiers who had being through traumatic events, many of them testified about the power of prayer, mediation and fel-

lowship that enable them to break loose from the trap of the emotional pain they have been through.

The other secret of spiritual resiliency is to be honest with little actions. Honesty in little actions means doing right when no one is looking.

The privilege of becoming a Soldier in the U.S. Army is the opportunity to learn to live out the core values of the military life.

The core Army values are loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage.

This is the bedrock of the Soldier's spiritual resiliency. The text above points out that if you are faithful in little actions, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little actions, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities.

Little actions such as being loyal to your family, being respectful to all people, staying humble and remaining honest in your tasks will make you a strong, determined and resilient Soldier in serving God and country.

'Operation Gumbo Drop,' holiday gift to service members

GUMBO FROM PAGE 1

The visit, dubbed "Operation Gumbo Drop," had its inception during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, when elements of the Mississippi National Guard were deployed to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Rep. Gene Taylor, a Democrat representing Mississippi's 4th District, said the idea came about in an unorthodox manner.

"The first time we did it ... it was elements of this unit and a lot of the spouses showed up at one of my town meetings shortly after the war ended," said Taylor, a 20-year veteran of the U.S. House of Representatives. "I made some dumb bet, 'Alright look, they're going to be home by the 4th of July. If they're not home by the 4th of July, I'll bring them some shrimp.' Unfortunately, they were not home by the 4th of July."

He brought the shrimp to the Soldiers in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, a port city where the unit was processing equipment, he said.

Since then, the congressmen continue to bring seafood to troops serving in Bosnia, Kuwait and Iraq several times annually.

"It's great – for some of these troops, this is the third or fourth time I've met them on a deployment," said Taylor, who is also a member of the House Armed Services Committee. "I'm over here to say 'Thank you' to them."

Rep. Erik Paulsen, a Republican from Minnesota's 3rd District; Rep. Bruce Braley, a Democrat from Iowa's 1st District; Rep. Brett Guthrie, a Democrat from Kentucky's 2nd District; and Rep. Alan Grayson, Democrat from Florida's 8th District, all served lunch to service members in the dining facility and visited with their constituents while they ate.

The Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, with the Mississippi National Guard's 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 13th ESC, took the opportunity to speak with their congressmen about issues that concerned them.

"I think it's always good when your elected representative can come and visit you, especially in war zone," said Pfc. Wesley Boleware, an infantryman with 1st Bn., 155th Inf. Regt., 155th BCT, 13th ESC.

Soldiers said the politicians put them at ease.

"It's my first time talking to a con-



Rep. Gene Taylor, a Democrat representing Mississippi's 4th District, talks about the mission in Iraq with Lt. Col. Jeffrey Van, commander of 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, 155th Brigade Combat Team with the Mississippi National Guard, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and Lt. Col. Garry Bush, commander of 2nd Battalion, 402nd Army Field Support Brigade, during a Dec. 14 visit to Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Five congressmen visited the base, roughly 50 miles north of Baghdad, to speak to their constituents and lift morale during the holiday season.

gressman," said Boleware. "He was very personable – it wasn't intimidating talking to him. He just kind of came off as a regular guy."

A few Soldiers talked politics with their congressmen, including Spc. Marlin S. Muller, also an infantryman with the 155th.

"Even though our political views differed, it's always good for morale to see your politicians are thinking about you as well as making the trip over here to see you," said Muller.

The congressmen said they learn a lot from their visits to Iraq and Afghanistan, while helping service members through their experiences here. Taylor said he realized the need for improved armor on Humvees following an improvised explosive device attack after a September 2003 visit to Iraq.

"We had a young man from home that

was badly injured by the first IED that I had heard of," he said. "I came back around Christmas time of '03 and members of that same unit had gone with what they called 'hillbilly armor,' which was the homemade stuff."

After seeing the damage wrought by the sub-par armor, Taylor said he and his fellow congressmen on the House Armed Services Committee worked hard to provide up-armored vehicles for Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"In spring of '05, a young man from this unit had lost both legs and his gunner had been beat up very badly from an underbody explosion, which led me to start searching for something better than that, which led to us to the mine-resistant vehicle," he said.

During their stop at Balad, the congressmen visited the 362nd Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, com-

manded by Lt. Col. Phillip Stewart. The 362nd ERS provides eyes and ears for troops on the ground via real-time, full-motion video and recently reached a milestone 1,000 combat sorties.

The congressmen also visited the Air Force Theater Hospital here at JBB. They met with the hospital staff, took a tour and visited Hero's Highway, the path from the emergency room to the helicopter landing pad. An American flag covers the ceiling of the Hero's Highway, through which wounded warriors are brought to the hospital or sent on to Germany.

At the end of the visit, the representatives signed the wall of the 332nd Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility, as do all VIPs who visit Balad.

Taylor said, "I just want to thank them for what they're doing and most of all want everyone to come home safely."



All of us here at Fort Hood want to send our love and thanks to all the brave Soldiers serving our nation. The fighters and the fallen are forever in our thoughts and prayers.

Thank you for being so strong out there.

Also, a personal shout out to my husband from his wife and son: Spc. Naveed Ali Shah, we love you very much and we miss you. We are so proud of you! Hamesha.

Keep up the amazing work everyone!

Love,

The Ali Shahs

First Iraqi bank on American base opens

BANK FROM PAGE 1

communities, and will give them the opportunity to learn how to use the banking services Al Warka provides.

Said Saleh Mohammed said the Iraqi bank will also help the local economy by providing jobs.

Bank administrators plan to open another bank in Tikrit, Said Saleh Mohammed said. The process should go smoother this time, using JBB as a model, he said.

"We would like to thank everyone that helped open this bank, especially the Iraqi-Based Industrial Zone," said Said Saleh Mohammed. "Hopefully, we're going to be able to help the Iraqis and the Americans."

Foster said he was excited to watch the new business open.

"It has been a long journey to be here today," he said. "We've had to overcome numerous obstacles. With the help of various Army, Air Force, and state department organizations, we were able to overcome those obstacles."



Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, commanding general of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) out of Fort Hood, Texas, Brig. Gen. Craig A. Franklin, commanding general of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, and Said Saleh Mohammed, the regional manager of Al Warka Bank for the Salah ad Din province, cut the ribbons during the opening ceremony of the Al Warka Bank Dec. 17 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.



NEW YEAR WATCH NIGHT SERVICE



Do you sing, dance, rap, write poetry, play music or just have a unknown talent for the Lord???

Good we are looking for you! Talented individuals/groups that are interested in performing at the Watch Night Service.

When: Dec. 31, 2009

Where: Sustainer Theater

Time: 2100-0030

If you are interested please contact:



Kimberly.Bell@blab.afcent.af.mil (SSgt Bell 443-6032)



Communication Soldiers aid in transportation mission

STORY AND PHOTO BY
2ND LT. NICHOLAS A. SWAB
96TH SUST. BDE.

AL ASAD, Iraq – There are only two communications and signal operators within the 47th Transportation Company – a switching systems network operator and a signal support specialist – which keeps them busy meeting the company's day-to-day and mission essential communication needs.

Spc. Nicholas Monroe, the switching systems network operator and a Virginia Beach, Va., native, and Sgt. Alfredo Ramirez, the signal support specialist and a Lajas, Puerto Rico native, keep the Soldiers with the 47th Trans. Co., 751st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) talking.

"Every day we make sure our convoys have good communication, and at the same time we take care of the responsibilities of being specialists in the (Counter Radio Electronic Warfare) systems," Ramirez said.

In addition to working with radio communications, Monroe and Ramirez ensure proper operations of movement tracking systems and communication security.

"We are very essential," Ramirez said. "No matter where the Army has people, they will always need communication. You need personnel, equipment and communication to win a war and it makes me feel very proud to be a part of that. Without us, the mission cannot be accomplished."

Monroe and Ramirez not only bring tactical and technical knowledge that aids in the completion of the company's mission, they work to bring security and peace-of-mind as well.

"I'm sure it's a bad feeling being outside the gate and having a broken radio," Monroe said. "That's why it makes me happy to go out and check the radios and communication before they roll out. I'm sure it makes the people on the convoy feel more confident."

These two put in twelve-hour work days and must be on call at a moment's notice.

"When one convoy is on the road, there is always another one we have to help get prepared," said Ramirez. "I would really like to go out on the missions to see the fruits of my labor, but the work needed before a convoy rolls out really keeps us here at the company."

Both Monroe and Ramirez said the long days are hard, but it helps knowing they bring peace to a nation and protect the people of Iraq and the United States.



Spc. Nicholas Monroe, a switching systems network operator with the 47th Transportation Company, 751st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Virginia Beach, Va., native, inspects a connection port on a movement tracking system transceiver. Monroe is one of two communications and signal specialists who aid in the company's mission to conduct logistical convoys.

Soldiers train with heavy equipment transport systems in Iraq

BY 1ST LT. KEVIN GERTZ
96TH SUST. BDE.

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – The behemoth heavy equipment transport systems creak and squeal as Soldiers move large vehicles and heavy loads through the 296th Transportation Company's training lanes.

Staff Sgt. Kenneth Hannah, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the HET training lanes and a Jacksonville, Fla., native, observes, instructs and executes training for equipment operators with 296th Trans. Co., an Army Reserve unit stationed at Camp Liberty, Iraq.

HET operators travel throughout Iraq to assist operations in support of the upcoming responsible drawdown of U.S. forces and equipment, by mov-

ing vehicles to staging areas to be relocated to other areas of operation, said Maj. Ralph Arrington, commander of the 296th and a Brookhaven, Miss., native.

First Lt. James Posey, the officer in charge of the 296th HET training program and a Hattiesburg, Miss., native, coordinates with other units at Camp Liberty to involve different vehicles in the training.

"Other units offer support for the HET operators by providing opportunities to practice winching and tying-down vehicles such as Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected and Stryker vehicles," said Posey.

Hannah watches closely as the operators use chains and other tools to secure vehicles on the HET trailers.

"Using different vehicles and load configurations in training provides the operators much needed experience for when they travel throughout

Iraq, maneuvering various types of loads and equipment," Hannah said. "Every type of vehicle gets tied down in a specific way by the operators and affects the operation of the HET system."

Hannah said he also ensures that the 296th's HET operators know how each type of vehicle affects their driving.

"The M1A1 Abrams tanks give the HET trailers a lower center of gravity but create large blind spots that the operators must learn to compensate for," he said. "MRAP vehicles raise the center of gravity of the trailers, causing the operators to be more cautious when driving around corners, or on uneven roadways."

Training takes place day and night, and scenarios can differ greatly. Some nights the operators practice a serpentine weave through cones and barriers, and other nights they practice

backing the systems straight down the road.

Hannah said the operators learn the difference between driving a HET system with independently turning wheels, called bogies, compared to a normal trailer with static axles and wheels.

"A HET drives more like a car than a regular trailer," he said.

The width of a HET trailer can cause issues, as operators drive down some of the narrow roads and checkpoints throughout Iraq, he said.

Hannah reinforces slow and cautious around turns and through checkpoints, regardless of tight schedules.

"It is important that HET operators transport equipment safely and quickly," said Lt. Col. Robert Dixon, the commander for the 260th CSSB and a Frankfort, Ind. native.

"Slow is smooth and smooth is fast," he said.

Fallen postal employees honored at new JBB east side post office

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. RYAN TWIST
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Seven Soldiers and two civilians were honored for their vital roles in postal operations during a dedication ceremony Dec. 17 for the new facility at the east side post office at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Capt. David W. Laes, commander of the 847th Human Resources Company out of Fort Snelling, Okla., with the 90th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), said the Soldiers and civilians who voluntarily give their time in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom are proud American citizens.

Laes, a St. Paul, Minn., native, said the Soldiers' and civilians' brave and vital tasks create a stable and secure environment for communities worldwide.

At JBB, those tasks sometimes involve placing themselves in harm's way by conducting missions that range from route clearance and reconnaissance to postal operations and logistical support convoys, he said.

"Since the beginning of operations in Iraq, there have been numerous casualties," said Laes. "We honor our fallen daily by continuing to serve and conduct our mission with integrity, bravery and honor. The postal personnel at Joint Base Balad are dedicating the newly built post office on east Balad to our fallen postal heroes that gave their lives in support of the United States of America."

Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, commanding general of the 13th ESC out of Fort Hood, Texas, said he was honored to be at the dedication.

"I think it's fitting and appropriate that the plaque down in (Camp) Liberty got moved up here and recognizes the nine fallen postal workers that paid the ultimate sacrifice," said Wentz. "It really represents the postal community and the folks that have been dedicated to providing mail services to Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and civilians in this theater for a long time."

Laes said the nine deceased performed postal missions across Iraq to ensure Warfighters and civilians



Capt. David W. Laes, commander of the 847th Human Resources Company out of Fort Snelling, Okla., with the 90th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), shakes hands with Wiley L. Fletcher, a KBR Inc. employee and the project manager for the postal mission in Iraq, at the dedication ceremony of the new east side post office Dec. 17 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Laes, a St. Paul, Minn., native, gave Fletcher, a Rosepine, La., native, the dedication plaque, which honors nine fallen postal workers.

kept in touch with friends and family back home. He said postal operations are a vital link for communication and high morale for service members at contingency operating locations throughout the country.

"Every unit in theater plays an enormous role in making sure that our mission is accomplished," he said. "As postal workers, we take pride in supporting every (service member) and civilian. By dedicating this post office to our fallen postal comrades, their dedication to service will always be remembered."

On the plaque are: Spc. Darryl Dent, 21, 547th Transportation Company, Washington, Aug. 26, 2003; Vernon Gaston, 45, KBR Inc., Lampasas, Texas, Sept. 3, 2003; Spc. Jeremy Ridlen, 23, 1544th Transportation Company, Illinois Army National Guard, Moroa, Ill., May 23, 2004;

Spc. Charles Lamb, 23, 1544th Trans. Co., Illinois Army National Guard, Casey, Ill., Sept. 5, 2004; Sgt. Shawna Morrison, 26, 1544th Trans. Co., Illinois Army National Guard, Paris, Ill., Sept. 5, 2004; Sgt. Jessica Cawvey, 21, 1544th Trans. Co., Illinois Army National Guard, Normal, Ill., Oct. 6, 2004; Pfc. Isaiah Hunt, 20, 497th Transportation Company, 1st Corps, Fort Lewis, Wash., Green Bay, Wis., Nov. 15, 2004; Sgt. Rocky Payne, 26, 497th Trans. Co., 1st Corps, Fort Lewis, Wash., Howell, Utah, Mar. 16, 2005; Fred Bryant, 39, KBR Inc., Jacksonville, Fla., Aug. 5, 2003.

"There are lots of lives, not one life is more important than the other one, those just happen to be the ones we picked," said Laes. "The (plaque) we have here is a reproduction of the one in (Camp) Liberty, Baghdad to honor the Soldiers."

Lt. Col. Tracy Williams, the human resources operations branch officer in charge with the 90th Sustainment Brigade out of Little Rock, Ark., 13th ESC, said she is happy to see the new facility finished.

"I'm just so glad it's over with because it has taken so long," said Williams, a Groveport, Ohio, native. "They spent (more than) \$600,000 on this facility. You don't want it to just sit."

The facility is larger than the previous building, allowing Soldiers to wait inside instead of out in the weather, said Williams. She said the extra space also accommodates more workers to increase efficiency.

Laes said they now have more table room for mandatory customs inspections. The new inspection tables have bins attached to them, which makes the area more customer friendly, he said.

Williams said she liked both facilities and considered the mission a success.

"I would love to come here in another year or so from now and see how it has progressed," she said. "The old facility had a very home feeling."

Wiley L. Fletcher, a KBR, Inc. employee and the project manager for the postal mission in Iraq, said the project went well under the circumstances.

"It's been really extreme at times," said Fletcher, a Rosepine, La., native. "I had no idea that there were so many rules and regulations. We've done great with it. We're proud of it and we're motivated to work here. We know the personnel that come through here will be well served by this facility."

Fletcher said the old post office set a record, with more than 18 million pounds of mail coming in and out of Iraq in December of 2007.

"We move anywhere from eight (million) to 18 million pounds a month," he said.

Laes reminded everyone present at the ceremony what the building, and the plaque, symbolized.

"(Americans) have given their lives in sacrifice for something that they believe will bring a better, more promising future for our children, grandchildren, and generations to come," he said. "We come together in the most difficult of times to help one another, whether in financial crisis, natural disaster or armed conflict."

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'White Bird' operations transport troops, VIPs

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

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – The D Company, 6th Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment White Birds ferry VIP passengers, including Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, Multinational Force – Iraq commander, and make sure they get where they need to go in Iraq.

“Basically, what we do here is support Gen. Odierno, the generals who support him and the VIPs who come in country,” said Capt. John MacHarrie, the company commander, a pilot with D Co. and a Melbourne, Fla., native.

The white birds earned their nickname because of the white planes they fly.

Chief Warrant Officer Keith Lynch, a pilot with D Company out of U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden, Germany, and a Winder, Ga., native, said high-priority passengers visit Iraq for delegations, meetings and troop interaction.

“We get these guys out there for exposure to their troops,” Lynch said.

Chief Warrant Officer William Sichterman, a pilot with F Company, 6th

Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment out of Stuttgart Army Airfield, Germany, and a Rapid City, S.D., native, said there are benefits to flying, as opposed to other modes of transportation, such as Humvees.

“The airplanes are faster,” he said. “It's expeditious for (the passengers), and it's a lot safer than ground transportation. It almost eliminates the risk of ambushes and (improvised explosive devices).”

Lynch agreed.

“We can do it rapidly and safely – transport them to the location where they need to go – and that gives them more time with their Soldiers,” he said.

MacHarrie said, aside from generals, the white bird pilots fly ambassadors and foreign heads of state. In November, they flew California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger around Iraq.

“It was interesting to meet somebody famous like that,” said Sichterman.

Yet Lynch said the pilots were not fazed by VIPs or generals, such as Gen. George W. Casey Jr., the Army chief of staff, who was once a passenger.

“It was like a normal flight,” he said. “We give them the respect they deserve and let them do what they need to do.”



U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer Keith Lynch, a pilot with D Company, 6th Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment, checks the landing gear on a Task Force 38 jet plane Nov. 25. Lynch and his unit are out of U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden, Germany.

Service members urged not to use space heaters

By SPC. MICHAEL V. CAMACHO
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Multi-National Forces – Iraq and Joint Base Balad, Iraq, policy prohibits the use of personal space heaters in workplace or living areas, according to JBB safety personnel.

Service members prone to cold-weather injuries may be authorized to use space heaters with a medical memorandum, said Staff Sgt. Robert Young, a noncommissioned officer in charge of safety with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and an Orlando, Fla., native. When a heater is authorized, it must have a four-foot area of clearance around it, he said.

The climate in Iraq rarely justifies the use of a space heater, and it is far easier to dress appropriately for cold-weather conditions, said Young.

All living quarters and most work places are equipped with a heating and air conditioning unit, said Sgt. Chester Jenkins, a fire inspector at the JBB Fire Department, with the 63rd Ordnance Company, 80th Ordnance Battalion, 90th Sustainment Brigade, 13th ESC and a Queensbury, N.Y., native.

The living conditions of deployed service members are a major factor in the risks associated with the use of



Charred debris is all that remains of a containerized housing unit at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, after a fire destroyed the room. The JBB Fire Department works to identify fire hazards in work and living areas, which often include overloaded power sources.

space heaters, he said. Living quarters and workplaces can be cramped with gear, equipment and personal items, leaving little space for the occupants, let alone a space heater, Jenkins said.

“There's a very high probability that something will come in contact with that space heater and cause a fire,” he said.

It is critical that even pre-installed units are maintained and function properly, he said.

Jenkins said the use of unauthorized electronics and devices can cause electrical fires and circuit shorts. He said the last reported space heater-related fire was caused by outlets overheating.

“The amount of amperage and current required to operate the space heater is very high,” he said. “The electrical wiring isn't designed for that type of draw – it just overheats and causes a fire. The electrical system here is not up to American standards. Any time there's a large demand put on it, it can cause heating problems and fires.”

A containerized housing unit can go up in flames within five minutes, said Jenkins. The fire can then spread to other housing units around it, endangering the lives of service members and civilian contractors in that area, he said.

Jenkins said the fire-safety policies are put in place because of events that have occurred.

He said anyone found using a space heater will receive a violation notice for having a fire hazard, said Jenkins. If the problem goes unchecked and an incident occurs, the violators or their superiors may be held responsible, said Jenkins.

“All our policies here are to keep the population at JBB safe,” he said. “Anything we put out is something that happened in the past, and we have learned from it and put in policy so it never happens again.”

Q-West military dog fetches induction into noncommissioned officer corps

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. MATTHEW C. COOLEY
15TH SUST. BDE.

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq – Although eat, sleep and fetch are the maximum requirements for most dogs, Rex is no normal German Shepherd.

Sgt. 1st Class Rex, a patrol explosive detector dog with the 178th Military Police Detachment, was inducted into the corps of noncommissioned officers by the 15th Special Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) during a ceremony Dec. 12 at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation tent at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq.

The ceremony for newly promoted NCOs inducted 32 Soldiers and Airmen, in addition to Rex, the highest ranking NCO participating in the ceremony.

Military working dogs are given a rank one higher than their handlers, so it is normal to have canine NCOs but very rare to have one officially inducted into the corps, said Staff Sgt. Cully Parr, Rex's military police dog handler with the 178th MP Det. and a McBride, Mich., native.

"It's probably the first time they've ever done this for dogs," he said.



Sgt. 1st Class Rex, a patrol explosive detector dog with the 178th Military Police Detachment, is presented as a new member in the corps of noncommissioned officers at an NCO induction ceremony Dec. 12 at the Morale Welfare and Recreation tent at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq.



Sgt. 1st Class Rex, a patrol explosive detector dog with the 178th Military Police Detachment, rests at the feet of Staff Sgt. Cully Parr, a military police dog handler with the 178th MP Det. and a McBride, Mich., native, at a Dec. 12 ceremony during which Rex was inducted into the corps of noncommissioned officers at the Morale Welfare and Recreation tent at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq.

Parr said the duo paired up in July after Rex, a two-year-old, finished the military's canine version of basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. The Army tries to pair working dogs and handlers who have similar personalities because it aids in their teamwork, he said.

"He doesn't work without me – I don't work without him," he said. "He's like any other Soldier."

Rex's primary job, explosives detection, is only awarded to dogs that meet strict requirements determined by thorough testing.

Parr said he began his career as an Army dog handler in late 2005 because he enjoys working with dogs and believes he can use the skills in a civilian career someday.

"It's one of the best jobs in the Army," he said.

Parr said having Rex inducted

was good for the other Soldiers' morale, and showed that military working dogs are Soldiers, too. He also enjoys taking Rex to such events because it serves as a recruitment tool for the program, he said.

"People just light up when they see him," he said.

After the ceremony, dozens of Soldiers took pictures with Rex. Parr cautioned that not all military working dogs are as well socialized as Rex, and said to ask permission from handlers before petting a working dog.

All of the NCOs inducted into the corps were presented with a certificate and presented by name to the audience as they stood, one by one, under crossed sabers.

"Being an NCO is more than acquiring skills, passing boards or completing courses," said Sgt. Elizabeth Whitehead, the 15th STB personnel

NCO, during the ceremony. "It is a change in the mentality of how we conduct our day-to-day business."

Prisoners of war and Soldiers missing in action were also honored at the ceremony with a Fallen Soldier's Table, a small empty dining table set for one.

Master Sgt. Terry Moten, the 15th STB training and schools NCO in charge and a Dallas native, was the guest speaker. First Sgt. Willie Johnson, with A Company, 15th STB, and 1st Sgt. Jeanette Short, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 15th STB, administered the oath of the United States Army noncommissioned officer and the charge of the noncommissioned officer respectively.

Although Rex could not take the oath, he barked excitedly after the ceremony.

"He is also a Soldier," said Parr.



Command Sgt. Maj. Nathaniel Barte, the 15th Sustainment Brigade's senior noncommissioned officer, shakes the paw of Sgt. 1st Class Rex, a patrol explosive detector dog with the 178th Military Police Detachment, at a Dec. 12 ceremony in which Rex was inducted into the corps of noncommissioned officers at the Morale Welfare and Recreation tent at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq.

Oasis International Waters facilities hydrate Iraq

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

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION ADDER, Iraq – The Oasis International Waters water purification facility at Contingency Operating Location Adder, Iraq, is one of six such facilities providing clean drinking water to service members, civilians and contractors working throughout the country.

Each facility is tasked with supplying a specific region of Iraq with drinking water, at the rate of four bottles per person per day, said Maj. Gerald Dougherty, the officer in charge of subsistence with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary). The number rises to six bottles per person per day in July and August, when the temperature typically gets the warmest.

The Oasis facility at Adder is contractually permitted to produce up to 17,500 cases, or 210,000 bottles, per day, but follows the direction of Dougherty, an Ellensburg, Wash., native, to determine the production amount necessary to sustain operations in Iraq.

Dougherty said the 13th ESC receives a daily headcount of personnel at each base, which helps estimate monthly production needs.

“Bottled water is the one thing that everybody has access to, so it’s a pretty big number,” he said. “Right now



James G. Lalonde, the site manager for the Oasis International Waters water purification facility at Contingency Operating Location Adder, Iraq, and a Clio, Mich., native, demonstrates the system used to purify water Nov. 11 in the Oasis facility at COL Adder.

we are ordering water for ... 270,000 (people).”

The Adder facility is responsible for providing water to all of the bases south of Baghdad, said Dougherty.

James G. Lalonde, the site manager for the Adder facility and a Clio, Mich., native, said the site’s purification system is equal to or better than

any system used in the United States, and is comparable to the system used by Aquafina.

“We supply a very high-quality product,” he said. “We are held to the same standards as purified water in the states.”

For quality assurance, the water processed at any of the six facilities

in Iraq is tested on site, at its destination and in the dining facilities where it is served. Samples are also sent to be tested in the United States.

“It’s tested a lot, so if there (are) any problems we would know about it pretty quickly, but we have had zero issues here,” said Lalonde. “I am pretty proud of the product that we make.”

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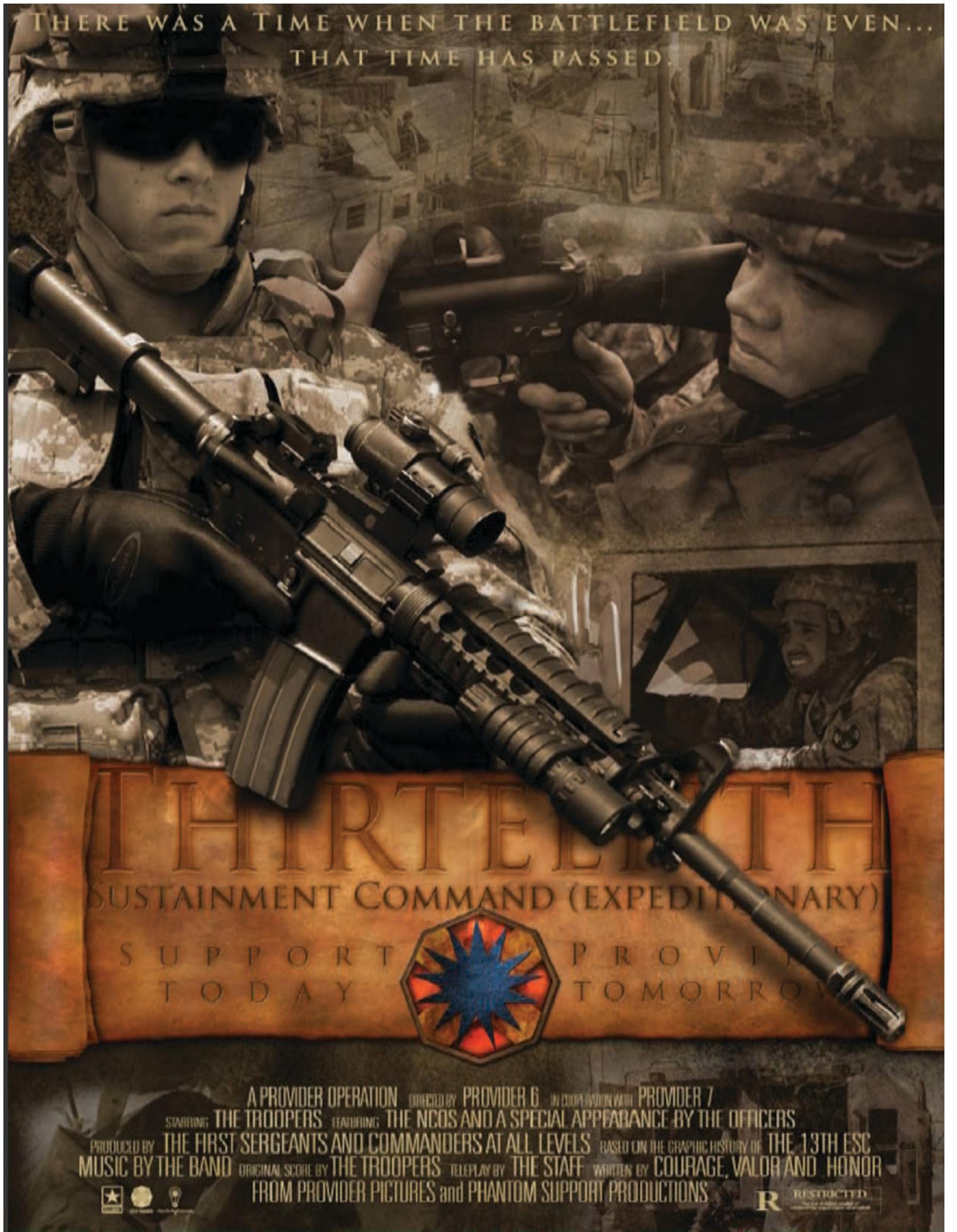
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Mississippi support troop

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

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq – Mississippi Army National Guard members conducted a convoy security mission Nov. 31 to Dec. 1 from Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq, to Contingency Operating Location Sykes, Iraq.

Members of 1st Platoon, A Company, 106th Brigade Support Battalion out of Magee, Miss., with 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms out of Senatobia, Miss., escorted civilian tractor-trailers on a mission distinguished because it was uneventful.

“This convoy escort mission had no hostile contact and no vehicle issues, no break downs, flat tires or accidents – the first mission I’ve seen with no issues,” said 2nd Lt. John A. Barrere, convoy commander from D’Iberville, Miss. “The Soldiers did an outstanding job of maintaining security and positive control of the civilian cargo trucks. The convoy was tight and smooth – the best I’ve been on, and it shows how much these Soldiers have adapted and grown over the last months.”

Since arriving in Iraq, the 1st Platoon Soldiers of Convoy Escort Team 2 executed 34 missions for a total of 68 convoy pushes, logging more than 3,500 miles along the highways of northern Iraq, said Barrere. Besides COL Sykes, CET 2 has visited COL Spe-

icher, COL Marez, Joint Base Balad and COL Sommerall, he said.

When they arrived, the Mississippians had a significant learning curve and mindset adjustment, said Barrere.

“These are support Soldiers, not combat arms, and we turned them into convoy security Soldiers, which is more like an infantry or military police type job,” he said. “They are cooks, mechanics, fuelers, supply specialists and such. They’re not used to this life, but they’ve done a great job.”

Spc. James B. Mangum, a gunner and a Magee, Miss., native, said he has adapted to the new mission well.

“We replaced an infantry unit,” he said. “I’m not infantry. I was trained as a ‘92 Fox,’ a petroleum supply specialist, a fueler, but I’ve never done that job. ... I don’t mind at all. I enjoy being a gunner a lot better than fueling.”

Spc. Latonya Warren, a gun truck driver and an Indianola, Miss., native, said she had to do some adjusting as well.

“I was trained as a cook, not as a gun truck driver,” said Warren. “Driving was a whole lot different than cooking in the dining facility. At first I was nervous, but now I feel fine with driving. When a mission is complete and everyone makes it home safe, it gives you outstanding satisfaction.”

Spc. Jason E. Dean, a wrecker operator fulfilling the duties of his military occupational specialty training, said he faced challenges.

“When we first got to Iraq, it was difficult,” said Dean, a Brooklyn, Miss., native.

Latonya Warren, a gun truck driver and an Indianola, Miss., native, inspects the engine of her Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle Dec. 1 in the Convoy Support Center at Contingency Operating Location Sykes, Iraq, before a mission. Warren belongs to 1st Platoon, A Company, 106th Brigade Support Battalion out of Magee, Miss., with 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms out of Senatobia, Miss.

“We had a lot of vehicles breaking down on missions and I was green then. I didn’t know my job well. In the past few months, I have improved a lot and I am more confident than ever.”

Dean said every convoy mission includes a recovery team, operating the heavy expanded mobility tactical truck. When a vehicle goes down, Dean said the recovery team has about 15 minutes to assess a situation and decide whether to fix or tow that vehicle.

“When a vehicle goes down, the whole convoy is vulnerable and me and my mechanic are exposed,” he said. “We’ve got to get that vehicle recovered and that’s the worst place in the world to be when you’ve got no time.”

“... A recovery crew has to use teamwork. If we decide to tow the vehicle, we have to divide the tasks. While my mechanic is hooking up a tow bar, I’m dropping a drive shaft and, if there’s another mechanic, he will be caging the brakes, which is how to unlock the brakes.”

Dean said operator maintenance was the key factor in decreasing the number of breakdowns since the unit arrived in Iraq. If truck crews do their preventative maintenance checks and services, he said they can avoid issues on the road.

In spite of the learning curve, Dean and his fellow Soldiers adapted well to the convoy security mission, said Barrere.

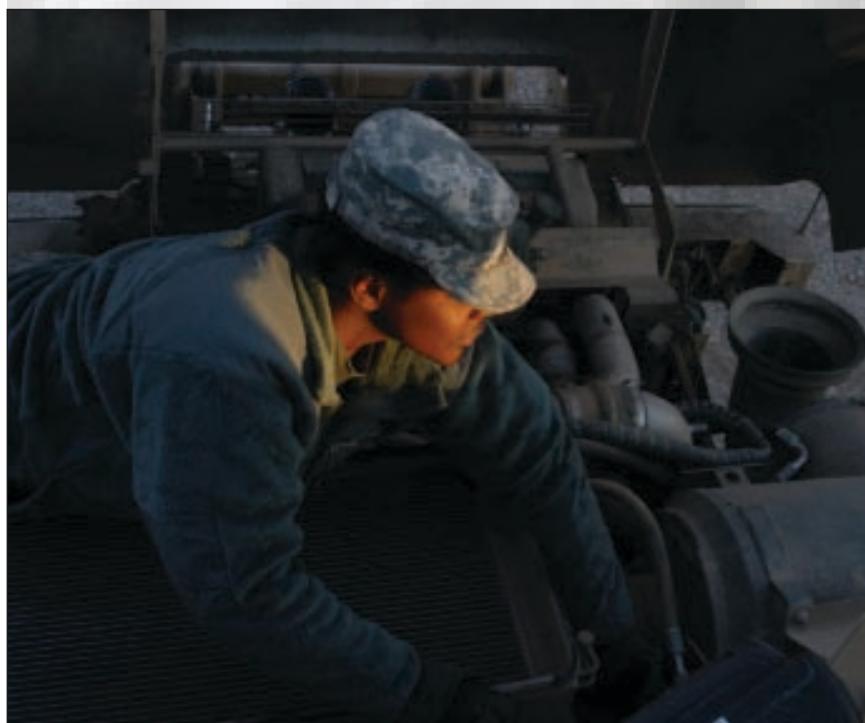
“I’m very impressed with how far these Soldiers have come since we mobilized,” he said. “They are doing outstanding. They hold their own with any combat arms unit doing this mission, and the proof is in the number of missions we are running. If we weren’t performing, we would have fewer missions. Many of these Soldiers prefer being on a convoy escort team to their initial support training.”

Sgt. Anthony Weghorst, lead scout truck commander and a Puckett, Miss., native, said the most exciting and exhausting experiences of his life happened during convoy missions.

“I’m more nervous standing in the Convoy Readiness Center briefing everyone on battle drills than I am in my vehicle on a mission,” he said. “I know what I’m doing on a mission.”

Dean said he spends as much time as he can on the road as part of a recovery crew.

“I love being on missions, especially during the



Members of 1st Platoon, A Company, 106th Brigade Support Battalion out of Magee, Miss., with 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms out of Senatobia, Miss., perform pre-mission inspections on their vehicles Dec. 1 at the Convoy Support Center of Contingency Operating Location Sykes, Iraq.



s provide convoy security

holidays for the distraction,” he said. “For some, living on the road is not the thing, but I volunteer to go out. Time goes by quicker and it gives you a sense of accomplishment. You feel like you’re doing something worthwhile.”

Sgt. Ricky L. Drummonds, a gunner and a Prentiss, Miss., native, said the missions offer opportunities for personal development.

“I want to see Iraq and this is the best way,” he said. “Plus, you find out a lot about yourself on these missions, your weaknesses and strengths. You turn your weaknesses into your strengths.”

In the lead scout crew, Barnes drives a gun truck

mounted with roller equipment designed to minimize the impact of improvised explosives devices. Attached to the front of his truck, the self-protection adaptive roller kit is designed to absorb the damage of IEDs and shield the vehicle and crew.

Barnes said he had a great sense of satisfaction mastering the SPARK system.

“I like driving the scout truck because not too many people can handle the SPARKs, especially this one, which is longer (and) has more segments,” he said. “To be able to drive a piece of equipment that not everybody can drive, that’s pretty cool. With no accidents, that’s motivating.”

Hometown, family ties bond convoy escort company

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq – A company of support Soldiers tasked with convoy security, used its Mississippi roots to jump the learning curve of an unfamiliar mission in Iraq.

Mississippi Army National Guard members with A Company, 106th Brigade Support Battalion out of Magee, Miss., with 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms out of Senatobia, Miss., stationed at Contingency Operating Q-West, Iraq, escort convoys throughout the country, providing security and assistance with a cohesiveness born of hometown ties.

Spc. Keenan Barnes, a scout driver and a New Hebron, Miss., native said the troops’ close ties and support system helped them adapt to their missions. These A Co. Soldiers grew up in the same communities, attended the same schools and churches, and some belong to the same family, said Barnes.

“I’m related to 10 people in the company,” he said. “This is my first deployment, and to be over here with family is a lot of support. When I come back from a mission, my cousins will stop by to see that I’m OK. We’ll talk about the mission, all of us together like that. And I do the same thing when they come back from missions, go and see how it went. That’s a pretty good feeling.”

Spc. Christopher Shaw, a scout gunner and a Taylorsville, Miss., native, said sharing a lengthy past with fellow Soldiers is comforting.

“We share a lot in common,” he said. “You can relate to people who knew you way before you joined the Guard. You can talk about things that happened five years ago and people know.”

Shaw said Soldiers from other units notice the difference.

“The California Guard unit we replaced, they noticed that we were different,” he said. “They said, ‘You all are so close. We aren’t that close.’ ‘That’s because a lot of people are kin to each other, a lot of cousins, even a couple brothers, and most of us grew up together, graduated the same schools.’”

Shaw said his unit received great support from its rural Mississippi communities.

“We were talking to those guys from California and we asked them what kind of celebrations their hometowns had for them when they left,” he said. “They said, ‘Our hometowns didn’t even notice when we left.’ We told them it was crazy, the support we got when we left. The whole town turned out to say goodbye. Really, that meant a lot to me. I’ll never forget it as long as I live.”

Spc. James B. Mangum, a gunner and a Magee, Miss., native, said the hometown support raised his spirits and reaffirmed his love for rural life.

“It’s good for morale, the hometown support,” said Mangum. “That’s why I’m glad I come from a small town.”



(Left) Seen through the rear door of a Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle, Spc. Christopher Shaw, a gunner and a Taylorsville, Miss., native, waits in the Convoy Readiness Center yard Nov. 31 at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq, before a convoy security mission to Contingency Operating Location Sykes, Iraq.

(Below) Standing in his gun truck turret, Spc. Marcus D. Glass, a gunner and a Magee, Miss., native, performs a function check on his M240B machine gun in the Convoy Support Center yard Dec. 1 at Contingency Operating Location Sykes, Iraq.



'Combat Carolers' bring holiday cheer to JBB

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

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Service members got into the holiday spirit Dec. 15 by singing Christmas carols and ceremonially lighting the Christmas tree on Sapper Circle at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Brig. Gen. Craig A. Franklin, commander of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, presided over the tree lighting and quoted President Barack Obama, from his speech during the national tree lighting Dec. 3 in Washington.

"The Christmas story is a Christian one, but its lesson is universal," he quoted. "It represents a tradition that we celebrate as a country, a tradition that has come to represent more than any one holiday or religion, but a season of brotherhood and generosity to our fellow citizens."

Franklin expressed the importance of the military family during the holiday season and commended the service members stationed at JBB for their part in the mission in Iraq.

"Although we cannot be with our families during this season, I cannot think of any other place I would rather be than with this family," he said. "(It is) my privilege to serve with each and every one of you, our fellow Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines. It is an elite group that is here, that has the honor and the privilege to serve our nation and also to serve the nation of Iraq, as we strive to help the



Capt. Brandy C. Brown, chaplain with the 332nd Expeditionary Security Forces Group and a Montgomery, Ala., native, and her Combat Carolers sing Christmas carols before the Christmas tree lighting ceremony Dec. 15 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Iraqi people have a representative government that hears their voice and gives them the rights that we so much enjoy."

Capt. Brandy C. Brown, chaplain with the 332nd Expeditionary Security Forces Group and a Montgomery, Ala., native, put together a singing group called the Combat Carolers, to improve morale and spread holiday cheer at JBB.

The group sang at the tree lighting and plans to continue caroling every night at the JBB United Services Organizations and the intensive care ward in the Air Force Theater Hospital, said Brown.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Paul Orthel, the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) supply branch technician and a Titonka, Iowa, native, sings at Gilbert Memorial Chapel at JBB, as well as with the Combat Carolers. He said caroling brings a little bit of home to Iraq, as service members gather and sing together.

"It is a great thing that we are able to do this," he said. "It was well arranged, considering the circumstances."

Brown said the military family cohesiveness is essential to high morale, especially during the holiday season.

"When you cannot be with the ones you love, when you cannot be with your friends and family back home and the military and the deployed environment is all you have, then you have to make to best of the situation," she said. "Who you have around you becomes your family. (During) the holidays it is very vital to keep your spirits up and to keep your holiday fervor bright. ... That is all we need to do, embrace each other for the holidays and become each others' family while we are here."

Stateside support groups send Christmas trees to JBB troops

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

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – The spirit of the season has not been forgotten at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

The 332nd Expeditionary Force Support Squadron is scheduled to receive 80 Christmas trees from Dees' Nursery and Florist in Ocean Side, N.Y., said Capt. Katie Garski, community service flight commander with the 332nd EFSS. The trees, which were delayed in transport from Dees' Maine nursery, will be distributed to Army and Air Force units at JBB, she said.

The nursery and the Adopt a Soldier Platoon, Inc., an organization dedicated to the morale and welfare of deployed service members, worked in conjunction with DHL Express to donate the trees to troops in Iraq, she said.

Alan Krutchkoff, president and founder of the Adopt a Soldier Platoon, Inc., a nonprofit organization out of New Jersey, said they have facilitated events for deployed service members since April 2003.

The organization supports all military branches and components that

are deployed to Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan, he said.

"Our mission is to improve the morale of our troops," said Krutchkoff, a Fair Lawn, N.J., native.

The group works heavily with DHL and more than 15 other sponsors and local organizations in the New Jersey and New York area. DHL's "Trees for Troops" program has shipped trees to Iraq and Afghanistan since early in Operation Iraqi Freedom and has been a huge morale booster for deployed service members, he said.

This is the fourth year DHL and the Adopt a Soldier Platoon have worked together to send Christmas trees to units deployed in the Middle East, he said.

Groups and organizations back home will always try to find a way to help those who are deployed, Garski said.

"They wanted to support those that are serving overseas during the Christmas time," said Garski, a Fargo, N.D., native. "It gives people a touch of home."

The trees will be passed to units at JBB who request them on a first come first served basis, said Senior Master Sgt. Michael Jones, superintendent of community flight services with the 332nd EFSS.

It is relatively easy to get a fake tree

online and have it shipped here in a few days, said Jones, an Indianapolis native. But it would not have that authentic pine tree feel, nor would it fulfill the spirit of the season many service members grew up with, he said.

The organization also donated menorahs for Jewish service members, which will be given to the chapel to be distributed, he said.

"To have real trees with the smell of pine and things of that nature, it symbolizes one of the attributes of Christmas," said Jones. "It's like a hallmark, it's the same thing as snow. To have real trees with the associated decorations will be a tremendous morale booster."

First Lt. Herbert Karg, executive officer with the 716th Quartermaster Company, 80th Ordnance Battalion, 90th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), said the 716th is slated to receive four Christmas trees.

"It's Iraq, we don't get snow here and the unit comes from the north eastern part of the United States," said Karg, an Oil City, Penn., native.

Serving their country overseas is no simple task, said Krutchkoff.

"We love our troops and feel it's our civic duty to support them and let them know America cares about them," he said.



An Army patrol cap hangs on a small Christmas tree adorning a desk at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. The 332nd Expeditionary Force Support Squadron is scheduled to receive 80 Christmas trees from Dees' Nursery and Florist in Ocean Side, N.Y., which will be distributed to Army and Air Force units at JBB.

Memorial provides recreation for deployed troops

By SPC. BETH GORENC
TASK FORCE 38 PUBLIC AFFAIRS

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Service members stationed at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, worked together to provide a sanctuary and memorialize Soldiers who lost their lives.

Red River Place was dedicated to seven B Company, 2nd Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment Soldiers who lost their lives in a September 2007 CH-47 Chinook crash, and was named after the aircraft's call sign: Red River.

Maj. Robb Barlow, Task Force 38 chaplain, said two trailers were transformed into a recreational area through a joint service effort between Airmen and Soldiers as a gift for everyone at JBB. Barlow recognized two Task Force 38 Soldiers for their work on the project: Staff Sgt. Jesse Bradbury, Task Force 38 chaplain assistant, and Sgt.

Sid Burgoon, Task Force 38 project manager.

"The Air Force owns it," said Barlow, a Shelbyville, Ind., native. "Sgt. Bradbury has been coordinating it, and Sgt. Burgoon has handmade most of the interior."

Barlow said the hard work and donated time and supplies give Red River Place all the conveniences people need to relax or spend time together.

"It's a good opportunity," he said. "It's something good for our Soldiers, and it's a nice lounge and hang-out area."

Airmen and task force Soldiers renovated the Red River Place trailers to create the lounge feel, by installing a custom-made hardwood floor, leather couches, computer and telephone stations, and a reading center.

"It's a little bit like home," said Burgoon, a Prior Lake, Minn., native. "It's got that nostalgia."

Burgoon said renovating the Red

River Place trailers will benefit the people who will use it once it opens, and the project provided personal gain for him.

"It feels like I accomplished something," he said. "I feel good about doing something for the good of everybody. It's probably one of the things I will remember most about this deployment."

Master Sgt. Wayne Leuthold, Task Force 38 liaison for the corps air operations in Baghdad, shared Burgoon's sentiment about improving Red River Place.

"We put a lot of hours into it, but it was an enjoyable project and I loved doing it," he said.

Leuthold said the shared knowledge of carpentry and assets of the TF 38 wood shop enabled he and his fellow Soldiers to create a lasting gift to JBB.

"It's something we can leave behind that all service members can enjoy," he said.

Master Sgt. Benita Futrell, Task

Force 38 chief paralegal and an Indianapolis resident, said Burgoon, Leuthold and Bradbury's dedication to providing a comfortable place to relax and mingle was admirable. She said she plans to follow their example by not only using Red River Place, but by also helping run it.

"I will use it when it opens, and I plan to volunteer to help run it because it's a good cause and has a good mission," she said.

Futrell said she is optimistic Red River Place will further assist task force unity because the service members are spread out between missions and work shifts.

"It will hopefully be a spot where troops can come together and socialize, since we seldom see each other while we are working," she said.

Red River Place is next to Freedom Chapel on JBB's west side. The facility is scheduled to be fully operational by mid-December.

Soldiers spread holiday cheer with Santa

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

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Dressed in Army combat uniforms, red and white hats, elf ears, red elf shoes with bells, and sunglasses, two Task Force 38 Soldiers accompanied the cotton-ball bearded, sunglass-wearing "Santa Wootten," as they walked from office to office distributing holiday cheer Dec. 4 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Indiana Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Jason Wootten, TF 38 plans noncommissioned officer in charge, received gifts for each Task Force 38 Soldier from his family and friends in Indiana. He then recruited Spc. Joshua Brooksher, a task force plans specialist, and Spc. Scott Wells, a task force intelligence analyst, to act as elves and help pass out the gifts.

"I love doing stuff like that," said Wootten. "It made things more joyous. Even though we are all adults and understand the real meaning behind the holidays, it was like a little part of home out here with Santa and the elves passing out presents."

Wootten's wife, her friend, mother and grandmother sent miniature Christmas trees and patriotically-decorated miniature stockings filled with candy for every Soldier in the unit.

"They heard me talk about past deployments where Soldiers didn't receive any gifts or packages for the holidays," said Wootten of his family. "They wanted to make sure every headquarters Soldier got a tree and stocking."

Female Soldiers also received a gift set of body wash, lotion and lip gloss along with their trees and stockings.

"There's not a lot of health and beauty aids here," said Wootten. "They wanted to make sure every female (Soldier) had something to make them feel ladylike."

To ensure the cheer-spreaders were festive while passing out presents, Spc. Shannon Statzer, a TF 38 headquarters and command staff assistant, made Wootten's beard and the elves' ears, nametags and jingling shoes.

"I thought it would be hilarious to see Spc. Wells and Spc. Brooksher dressed up as elves," said Statzer, a Cicero, Ind., native. "It helped the guys get into the holiday spirit and into what they were doing, and it also helped me get more into the holiday spirit."

Statzer said while the attire was fun and uplifting, the three costumed Soldiers reinforced more serious ideas of camaraderie, support and family togetherness.

"The closer the holidays get, the more I have noticed my fellow Soldiers becoming sad that they won't be with their families," said Statzer. "I think this brought smiles and laughs to the unit. Soldiers might not be with their loved ones back home, but now they can see that they have a family here that cares about them too."

Wells, a Shelbyville, Ind., native, said dressing up as "Holly," the elf, to pass out presents to Soldiers was a fun and rewarding experience.

"It was exciting and a change of pace," he said. "It was good to see a smile on everyone's faces. People weren't expecting it and I think we re-



Indiana Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Jason Wootten, Task Force 38 plans noncommissioned officer in charge, hands a miniature stocking and Christmas tree to Command Sgt. Maj. John Watson, with TF 38, Dec. 4 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Wootten and his elves distributed presents to task force Soldiers to boost morale during the holiday season.

minded them that people still care."

Wells said helping raise Soldiers' spirits during the holidays while away from their families was gratifying.

"It gave me the best feeling I've had since I've been here," he said.

Soldiers who received the gifts said they were also grateful for the camaraderie and holiday spirit.

"I was presently surprised," said Maj. Dwight Mood, TF 38 information officer and a South Bend, Ind., native. "It's the little things that add to esprit de corps, and that was one of them. Also, having a Christmas tree on your desk makes it feel more like the holidays."

Celebrating holidays during the deployment was a common morale booster

for task force Soldiers. The Task Force 38 medical section hosted a Halloween costume party at the troop medical clinic. The dining facility staff celebrated Thanksgiving with elaborate decorations, festive costumes and a Thanksgiving Day feast.

Brooksher, a Muncie, Ind., native, said celebrating the holidays was a morale booster, and every holiday is a time to have fun.

"We are doing the best we can to spread holiday cheer to Task Force 38 Soldiers," said Brooksher, also known as "Noel," the elf. "I hope we continue to pull shenanigans and have fun with every holiday (during) the rest of our deployment to keep morale up here."

Soldier turned missionary evangelizes in Ukraine

By SGT. KEVIN CARPENTER
96TH SUST. BDE.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Instead of letting the Army fly him home to friends and family on leave, a Rochester, Wash., Soldier spent his two weeks as a Christian missionary in Ukraine.

Spc. Aralem Valladaresflores is deployed with the 1161st Transportation Company, 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) out of Ephrata, Wash., in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Valladaresflores' heard of evangelical missions to Russia and Ukraine through friends, he said. His newest mission took him to Berdychiv, a small city in Ukraine.

"My friends had told me about going on missions there and explained to me a lot of the needs, especially with the orphaned kids," he said. "That's something that I've done before."

He said he worried that communication would pose a problem, as his Russian-Ukrainian vocabulary was very limited.

"The challenge was the language, because I didn't know how I was going to handle that," said Valladaresflores. "It was like a crash course to me. I didn't have a translator all the time, so that made it more challenging."

Valladaresflores said he was a guest of Pastor Leonid Zhuchkov and spent his time working at Zhuchkov's church, Novay Chass. Despite the language barrier, the two learned to communicate

effectively and Valladaresflores enjoyed his stay in the pastor's home, he said.

"He turned out to be a really awesome chef," said Valladaresflores. "Everything he cooked was natural, homemade meals. I could tell the difference between food I'm used to eating in the dining facilities and his way of cooking. It was a world of a difference."

While at Novay Chass, Valladaresflores said he worked in an after-school program with the orphaned and foster children of Berdychiv.

Most families in the area live on less than \$120 per month, he said.

Valladaresflores said he taught the children stories from the Bible, including those of Johah, David and Goliath, and Jesus' miracle healing, and then he had them act out the parts.

Their enthusiasm was infectious, he said.

"I love the energy the children have, especially the children who have grown up not having all that we have," he said. "There's something special about that."

Valladaresflores said he attributes his involvement in mission work to a spiritual awakening that occurred when he was younger.

"When I was 16, I was questioning a lot of things and questioning my purpose," he said. "I had a miraculous experience. It's hard to put into words how I experienced that. It felt like somebody flashed this light into my mind and I could understand things I could never understand before. It was a total change of heart."

Following this, Valladaresflores began traveling on mission trips, serving in Mexico and Guatemala, where he



Courtesy photo

Spc. Aralem Valladaresflores, a heavy wheeled vehicle operator with the 1161st Transportation Company, 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Rochester, Wash., native, talks to children during a mission trip to Berdychiv, Ukraine, while on leave from his deployment at Camp Taji, Iraq.

had been raised by his grandparents, he said.

"I found this thing that brought me such great joy and I wanted to be able to go out and share it," he said.

First Lt. Anthony Latham, platoon leader with the 1161st Task Force and a Spokane, Wash., native said leave offers Soldiers opportunities they look forward to, and their choice of leave location says a lot about them.

"In the case of Spc. Valladaresflores, it speaks volumes that he would volunteer his time and energy helping those in need," said Latham. "I hope Soldiers ... feel inspired (by Valladaresflores) to

volunteer on their leave and after they return home from their deployments. There will always be opportunities in faith-based or non-profit organizations around the world."

Valladaresflores said he hopes to continue his mission work with a full-time traveling ministry. He said he found the trip to Ukraine a refreshing and challenging change from his work in Iraq and was happy to be able to help those in need.

"The compassion of this small town and the adorable children have once again engraved in my mind a most honorable and delightful end to my evangelical mission," he said.

Where are my photos?

You can find them on Provider Common!

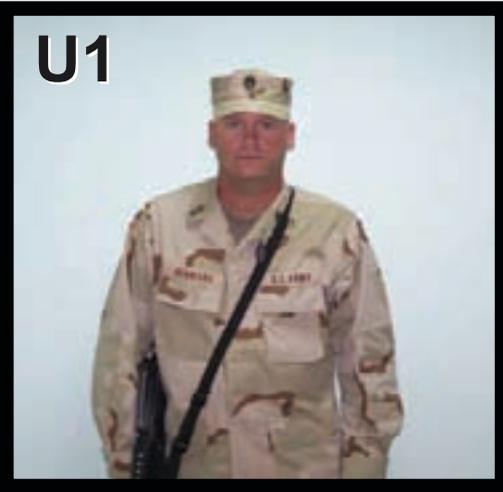
Start ---> Run
Type: \\balafsv\lzn03\PROVIDER_COMMON

or

--Select "PAO" from the JBB homepage

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

Force protection uniform postures

	IBA	Kevlar	Uniform	Conduct PT
<p>U1</p> 	<p>Accessible within 10 minutes.</p>	<p>Accessible within 10 minutes.</p>	<p>DCU/ACU/ service equivalent. PT uniform allowed for PT or off duty and can be worn in DFAC/PX.</p>	<p>No restrictions.</p>
<p>U2</p> 	<p>Worn when outdoors for specified time or event.</p>	<p>Worn when outdoors for specified time or event.</p>	<p>DCU/ACU/ service equivalent. PT uniform allowed for PT only and cannot be worn in DFAC/PX.</p>	<p>Restriction: PT only in hardened facilities. Can run with IBA and Kevlar.</p>
<p>U3</p> 	<p>Worn outside hardened facility.</p>	<p>Worn outside hardened facility.</p>	<p>Same as U2. DCU/ACU/ service equivalent. PT uniform allowed for PT only and cannot be worn in DFAC/PX.</p>	<p>Restriction: PT only in hardened facilities. Can run with IBA and Kevlar.</p>
<p>U4</p> 	<p>Worn.</p>	<p>Worn.</p>	<p>Same as U3, but with ballistic goggles and combat earplugs.</p>	<p>Not authorized.</p>

Postcards from family, friends at home lift Soldier's spirits

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. JOHN STIMAC
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – An officer with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) has wallpapered his office with more than 200 postcards from family and friends in the United States.

Maj. Patrick L. Rowe, the Iraqi Security Forces transition team chief with the 13th ESC and a Philpot, Ky., native, said the collection started in response to regular mobilization updates he sent home upon arriving at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

"I started to receive postcards from my brother and wife," he said. "I had a big blank wall behind me and I just started hanging them up there."

Rowe's brother, a truck driver, sends him postcards from throughout the U.S., he said.

"I thought I'd get a handful from my wife and kids, but not all this," he said. "It's good to think that people are remembering you when they're doing regular, mundane activities."

Maj. Jose L. Flores, the ISF operations plans officer in charge with the 13th ESC and Brooklyn, N.Y., native,



Maj. Patrick L. Rowe, Iraqi Security Forces transition team chief with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and Philpot, Ky., native, sits next to the postcard collection sent to him from family and friends during his deployment to Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Rowe has received more than 200 postcards, roughly three to four a week.

said the growing collection helps keep Rowe's morale up.

"It started out with around 10 to 20, and now you can see how far it went," he said.

Rowe said he is happy to have the visual reminders of his country's beauty.

"Now I have a little bit of America on my wall," he said.

Do you
have a
story
idea?

Contact
us at:

expeditionarytimes@
iraq.centcom.mil

Mississippi Guardsman receives impact award

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

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq – A Mississippi Army National Guardsman received an Army Achievement Medal during a ceremony in the Convoy Readiness Center Dec. 11 at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq.

Sgt. Bradley S. McNealy, a gun truck commander with C Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms out of Oxford, Miss., and an Indianola, Miss., native, received the impact award for outstanding performance, presented by Lt. Col. Kerry Goodman, commander of 2/198th CAB out of Senatobia, Miss.

"It's always good to recognize outstanding service," said Goodman, a Quitman, Miss., native. "When a Soldier deserves recognition, I have the privilege of giving an impact award to acknowledge that Soldier's significant impact on the mission."

Sgt. McNealy has raised the level of performance of those around him, and Soldiers like him are the backbone of our mission."

Capt. Jeff Mallard, Jr., McNealy's

company commander, had high praise for McNealy.

"Sgt. McNealy has proven himself as the single finest truck commander in the company," said Mallard, a Bay City, Texas, native. "He has served outstandingly as an assistant convoy commander and rear security truck commander, performing his duties with expertise in over 50 missions."

In addition to performing above expectations, McNealy also distinguished himself for his willingness to make personal sacrifices, said Mallard.

"He was so dedicated to the mission and his fellow Soldiers that he opted not to take rest and relaxation leave, to stay," said Mallard. "He has directly contributed to good order through his model of integrity in off-duty conduct, and his personal courage in routinely volunteering for the most dangerous positions in his convoys."

McNealy said he was surprised by the recognition.

"I didn't see this coming," he said. "It's my job and I like doing what I'm doing. I do the best I can and I try to help the younger Soldiers as much as possible."

McNealy also shared the credit with



Lt. Col. Kerry Goodman (left), commander of 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms out of Senatobia, Miss., and a Meridian, Miss., native, poses with Sgt. Bradley S. McNealy, a gun truck commander with C Company, 2/198th CAB out of Oxford, Miss., and an Indianola, Miss., native, after a ceremony at the Convoy Readiness Center Dec. 11 at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq, in which McNealy received an Army Achievement Award. Goodman bestowed the award to McNealy for outstanding performance.

his fellow platoon members.

"It's a team effort, really," he said. "We've all learned this mission and

everybody knows what they're doing. I feel safe serving here with these Soldiers."

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

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

Level: Hard

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

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. What Bill Murray "Ghostbusters" term did Persian Gulf warriors use to describe being hit by chemical weapons?
2. What country left the League of Nations in 1933?
3. What president's mug graces a \$100,000 bill?
4. What U.S. president installed solar panels on the White House roof?
5. Who did Abraham Lincoln promote to major general of volunteers after he captured Fort Henry and Fort Donelson?

1. Skinned 2. Germany 3. Woodrow Wilson 4. Jimmy Carter 5. Ulysses S. Grant

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)

ISLAMIC PRAYER - Friday

1230 Provider Chapel

PAGAN/WICCAN FELLOWSHIP - Thursday

1900 The Shack

Saturday

1900 The Shack

GREEK ORTHODOX - Sunday

0900 Provider Annex

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CALL:

Gilbert Chapel: 443-7703

Provider Chapel: 433-2430

Freedom Chapel: 443-6303

JB BALAD ACTIVITIES

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., 6 p.m. Tue., Thu., - 7 a.m., 3 p.m. Sunday- 5:45 a.m., 3 p.m. P90x: 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. 5 on 5 Basketball: Saturday- 8 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. Saturday- 8:30 p.m. Darts: Saturday- 8:30 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.	Friday- 7 p.m. Aerobics: Monday, Wednesday, Friday- 7 p.m. Body by Midget Toning Class: Tue., Thu., - 7 p.m. Dodge ball Game: Tuesday- 7:30 p.m. Furman's Martial Arts: Mon., Wed., Sun., - 1 p.m. Gaston's Self-Defense Class: Fri., Sat., - 7 p.m. Open court basketball: Thursday- 7 p.m. Open court soccer: Mon., Wed., - 7 p.m. Zingano Brazilian Jiu 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. 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. 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. 5 on 5 Basketball: Saturday- 8 p.m.	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. Saturday- 8:30 p.m. Darts: Saturday- 8:30 p.m.	Monday, Wednesday, Friday- 7 p.m. Body by Midget Toning Class: Tue., Thu., - 7 p.m. Dodge ball Game: Tuesday- 7:30 p.m. Furman's Martial Arts: Mon., Wed., Sun., - 1 p.m. Gaston's Self-Defense Class: Fri., Sat., - 7 p.m. Open court basketball: Thursday- 7 p.m. Open court soccer: Mon., Wed., - 7 p.m. Zingano Brazilian Jiu Jitsu: Tue., Thu., - 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	Friday- 8 p.m. 5 on 5 Basketball: Saturday- 8 p.m.	Monday- 8 p.m. 9-ball tourney: Monday- 8 p.m.	Saturday- 7:30 p.m. 6 on 6 volleyball tourney: Saturday- 7:30 p.m.	WEST FIT-NESS CENTER 3 on 3 basketball tourney: Saturday- 7:30 p.m. CIRCUIT GYM Floor hockey: Mon., Wed., Fri., - 8-10 p.m.

UPCOMING SPORTS ON AFN



Thursday 12/24/09

Houston Rockets @ Orlando Magic, Live 3 a.m. AFN/xtra
 2009 San Diego County Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl: Utah vs. California, Live 4 a.m. AFN/sports
 Cleveland Cavaliers @ Sacramento Kings, Live 6 a.m. AFN/xtra

Friday 12/25/09

UFC: Best of 2009, Tape Delayed 3 a.m. AFN/xtra
 2009 Sheraton Hawaii Bowl: Nevada vs. SMU, Live 4 a.m. AFN/sports
 MLB Network Special: 2009 National League Plays of the Year, Live 8 a.m. AFN/xtra
 REAL Sports with Bryant Gumbel * TV's Most Honored Sports Magazine, Tape Delayed 6 p.m. AFN/sports
 NBA Christmas Special: Boston Celtics @ Orlando Magic, Live 10:30 p.m. AFN/ sports

Saturday 12/26/09

NBA Christmas Special: Cleveland Cavaliers @ Los Angeles Lakers, Live 1 a.m. AFN/sports
 Friday Night Football: San Diego Chargers @ Tennessee Titans, Live 3:30 a.m. AFN/sports
 NBA Friday: Los Angeles Clippers @ Phoenix Suns, Live 4 a.m. AFN/sports

Sunday 12/27/09

2009 Meineke Car Care Bowl: Pittsburgh vs. North Carolina, Live 12:30 a.m. AFN/sports
 New Jersey Devils @ Washington Capitals, Live 3 a.m. AFN/prime atlantic
 Washington Wizards @ Minnesota Timberwolves, Live 4 a.m. AFN/xtra
 2009 Emerald Bowl: Boston College vs. USC, Live 4 a.m. AFN/ sports

Monday 12/28/09

Nashville Predators @ Chicago Blackhawks, Live 3 a.m. AFN/prime atlantic
 Sunday Night Football: Dallas Cowboys @ Washington Redskins, Live 4:15 a.m. AFN/sports
 2009 Gaylord Hotels Music City Bowl: Kentucky vs. Clemson, Live 4:30 a.m. AFN/xtra

Tuesday 12/29/09

2009 AdvoCare V100 Independence Bowl: Texas A&M vs. Georgia, Live 1 a.m. AFN/sports
 NHL on VERSUS: Detroit Red Wings @ Columbus Blue Jackets, Live 3 a.m. AFN/xtra
 Monday Night Football: Minnesota Vikings @ Chicago Bears, Live 4:30 a.m. AFN/sports
 Boston Celtics @ Golden State Warriors, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN/xtra

Wednesday 12/30/09

2009 EagleBank Bowl: Army/UCLA vs. Temple, Live 12:30 a.m. AFN/sports
 NHL on VERSUS: Chicago Blackhawks @ Dallas Stars, Live 4 a.m. AFN/xtra
 Golden State Warriors @ Los Angeles Lakers, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN/xtra

Arts & Entertainment

Wolfmother changes lineup, little else

BY SGT. KEITH S. VAN KLOMPENBERG
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



It's hard to forget Wolfmother's self-titled debut album.

Even if you never listened to the band on purpose, I'm fairly certain you heard the infectious single, "Woman" a thousand times. The song was featured on the video game Guitar Hero II and numerous commercials. It was a catchy song that suffered from media overkill.

The second single from that album,

"Joker and The Thief," was featured in several videogames as well, including Rock Band.

Between the 2005 debut release and 2009's "Cosmic Egg," the band has gone through a complete lineup change, leaving singer and guitarist Andrew Stockdale as the only original member.

The rest of the band is unoriginal I guess. At least that's what it sounds like to me.

Stockdale is a talented musician and comes up with some cool guitar riffs, but nothing here is as catchy or interesting as those first singles. I have no

doubt some of these new songs will appear on the next incarnation of Guitar Hero or Rock Band. They probably already have.

I'm starting to think he's actually writing songs specifically for the video games. Whatever pays the bills, I guess. Maybe that's why the original band members quit.

Maybe I'm way off base, but to me it sounds like a guy trying to take the guitar sound of the heavier White Stripes songs and combine it with the arena-sized superstar rock we have started to hear from Kings of Leon lately.

Others will claim Stockdale's sound

is just derivative of the old rock legends from the '60s and '70s, and it probably is, but honestly, who isn't borrowing from Hendrix and Led Zeppelin these days? He is doing a good job achieving these classic sounds, but his modernization of those sounds seems ripped off to me.

There is one standout track for me on this album. "White Feather" is catchy and classic sounding, like the band is doing what comes natural to it.

The album is completely listenable and I don't hate it, but it's definitely an example of a band failing to follow up a great debut.

King delivers a mammoth hit ... it's good, too

BY STAFF SGT. ROBERT E. FAFOGLIA
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



In grade school, when I had the attention span of a gnat, I believed books should grab me by the ears and pull me in violently,

where I would stay locked in a full nelson until the very last page.

This lasted until a wise English teacher taught me a lasting lesson.

He said, "Not every book starts with a bang. Some require commitment. But if you take the time, you will never come away worse for the experience."

Stephen King's latest creation, "Under the Dome," could not have proved that old man any righter.

While monstrous, at more than 1,000 pages, it is not the longest book King has written (that honor belongs to

"The Stand"). However, it is arguably one of his best. What it requires from the reader is simple: a little time to pick up momentum.

Like so many of King's tales, "Under the Dome" is set in Maine, in a small town populated by small-town people.

Dale "Barbie" Barbara, a former Army lieutenant, decides it is time to leave the town of Chester's Mill after being attacked and savagely beaten by a group of thugs led by Junior Rennie.

Before he can thumb a ride across the town line, however, an invisible barrier slams down around Chester's Mill. No one knows where it came from or why it is there. All that is certain is that no one can get in or out of the trapped town. They are cut off, alone.

The U.S. military responds immediately, "tapping" Barbie via cell phone. He has been promoted and charged with taking control of the situation,

acting as a liaison between the town and the outside world.

This does not sit well with the powers that be in Chester's Mill, namely Second Selectman Jim Rennie, father to the boy who assaulted Barbie.

Jim Rennie has his own plans for the town, plans he intends to make a reality with the dome's help. Sides are chosen and the two men square off, with the town and its residents trapped in the middle.

True to King's form, insanity ensues.

The first few chapters tend to drag a bit as King takes the time to introduce his characters. This is where patience comes in, as there are a lot of them, but that's to be expected in a book this size.

The characters could use more fleshing out, as many lacked the backstory we find in other King tales. Some

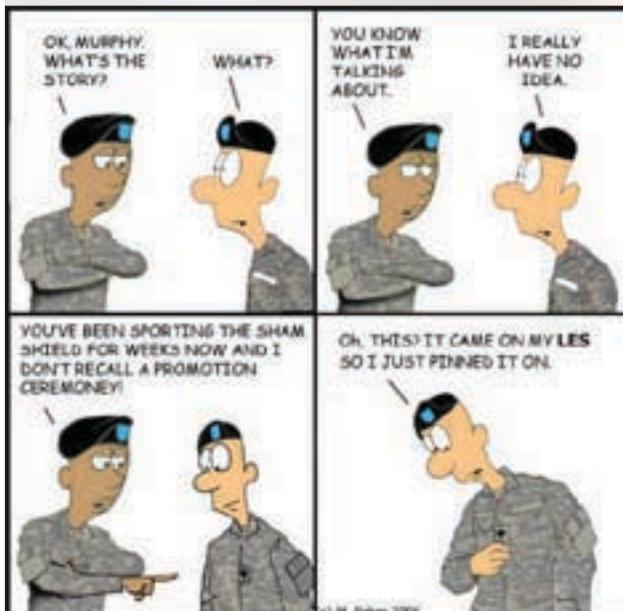
seemed exceptionally topical, as if they were created merely to be killed off during the first few chapters.

What King does well here – what he always does well – is examine human interaction and the way we treat one other when we think no one is looking. The sides are clearly defined for us: good on one side, evil on the other. What is even more interesting is the gray in the middle, all the minor characters. Here is a town we know, or thought we knew, now watch it destroy itself.

Whether you're a fan of Stephen King or you're just looking to prop up that coffee table in your living room, do yourself a favor and pick up "Under the Dome." It will entertain you, it will scare you and, just maybe, it will make you think.

Just make sure you don't have any plans for a week or two.

PVT MURPHY



Sustainer Reel Time Theater

Wednesday, Dec. 23

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

Sunday, Dec. 27

2 p.m. Did You Hear About The Morgans?
5 p.m. The Fourth Kind
8 p.m. Avatar

Thursday, Dec. 24

5 p.m. The Princess And The Frog
8 p.m. Invictus

Monday, Dec. 28

5 p.m. Amelia
8 p.m. Did You Hear About The Morgans?

Friday, Dec. 25

2 p.m. The Fourth Kind
5 p.m. Avatar
8:30 p.m. Did You Hear About The Morgans?

Tuesday, Dec. 29

5 p.m. The Men Who Stare At Goats
8 p.m. Amelia

Saturday, Dec. 26

2 p.m. Avatar
5 p.m. Did You Hear About The Morgans?
8 p.m. The Men Who Stare At Goats

Wednesday, Dec. 30

5 p.m. Avatar
8 p.m. The Men Who Stare At Goats



PHOTOS AROUND IRAQ

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



Iraqi fishermen bring in their catch from the marshes in the early morning Dec. 4 near Joint Security Station Um Sa'ah, Maysan, Iraq. The fishermen spend all night on their boats catching fish to sell at the local markets as their primary source of income.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Matthew D. Leistkow

Lt. Col. Terry Cook, battalion commander of 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, applauds Maj. Gen. Turhan Abdurahman Mustafa, deputy chief, Kirkuk Provincial Police, after his speech at the wall dedication ceremony Dec. 9 at the Provincial Police Headquarters in Kirkuk, Iraq. The wall is in honor of the U.S. service members who served in Kirkuk and gave their lives to help the Iraqi Police make the city more secure.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Anderson Savoy

Peshmerga Soldiers shoot at a target while being trained in a reflexive fire drill by U.S. Soldiers assigned to G Battery, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Oct. 13 in Qarahangeer, Kirkuk, Iraq.



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

A medic with the 32nd Iraqi Army Brigade prepares to give another Soldier an injection prior to a mass casualty exercise conducted Nov. 17 in Kut, Iraq. The exercise was conducted to test the readiness of medics with the Iraqi Army after months of training.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Canaan Radcliffe

An Iraqi Army Soldier assigned to the 47th Iraqi Army Brigade counts out money during a Sons of Iraq payment mission with U.S. Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Oct. 22, in Multaqa, Iraq.

NEWS AROUND IRAQ

Human Rights Day focuses on Iraqi individual struggles

BAGHDAD – The Ministry of Interior inspector general – human rights office sponsored a conference marking the 61st International Human Rights Day at Ishtar-Sheraton Hotel in Baghdad.

Speakers repeatedly expressed condolences to more than 200 attendees for the victims and the families of those lost during the Dec. 8 bombings in Baghdad.

The representative for the Counsel of Representatives said, “Their rights as humans and as Iraqis were erased. It is now time for everyone to recognize the importance of human rights.”

The awareness raising event was designed to fostered inter-agency cooperation and to encourage individuals to become involved in the human rights struggle as well as to fight against discrimination in Iraq.

Maj. Gen. Richard Rowe noted the inspector general’s progress and committed to assist in any endeavor that ensures the protection of the human rights of the Iraqi people.

After highlighting the accomplishments related to the Human Rights Directorate, speakers noted the enduring nature of the need to end human rights abuses, promising to persevere in the face of adversity.

Attendees later watched by a short play and poetry dedicated to the story of the fight for human dignity.

Counter Explosives Directorate opens new school

BAGHDAD – The Iraqi General Counter Explosives Directorate conducted the grand opening of a new \$23 million facility Dec. 5 in al-Muthana, Iraq.

Roughly 150 new explosive ordnance disposal teams are expected to train at the school in coming months.

Iraqi Maj. Gen. Jehad, GCED director, hosted the ceremony and grand opening. He addressed the visiting dignitaries.

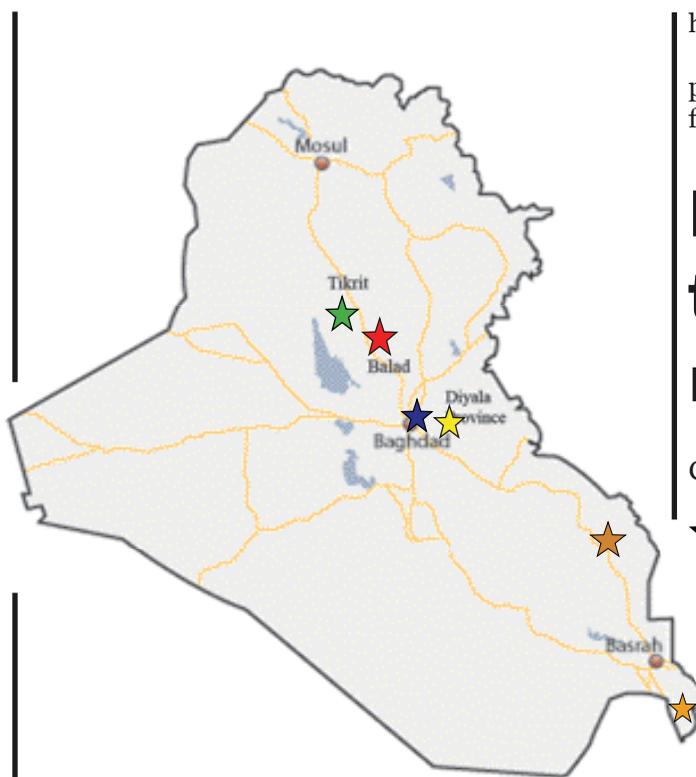
“When a citizen finds a bomb, they call on us,” Jehad said. “It is our job to defuse the bombs and to keep the public safe. This school will allow us to teach more EOD officers how to do their job correctly.”

The school facility includes classrooms for instruction, an IED display area, training areas and living quarters.

U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Richard Rowe, director of the Iraq Training Advisory Mission, spoke to the crowd at the graduation ceremony.

“The capability that this school brings to the GCED will ensure that Iraq can reverse the trend of the enemy success with IEDs,” Rowe said.

The buildings are located on the federal police compound in the al-Muthana district of Baghdad. After the contract for training the Iraqi EOD teams is complete, the federal police will have full use of the facility.



Iraqi Warrant Service Team graduates course on conflict stress

BAGHDAD – Six members of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior’s Warrant Service Team graduated from the Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in Police Actions class Dec. 3 in Baghdad.

The class introduced the work of David Grossman from his book, “On Combat, the Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and in Peace.” The students learned about a universal human phobia – human aggression. The class taught how the body reacts to conflict through the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

Students learned how leaders should apply techniques to their training to help manage stress in high-risk situations.

The course included training on recognizing what condition of stress police officers may face during critical missions and how to mitigate the high stress they may experience when involved in a dangerous and unpredictable situation.

The focus on tactical breathing was emphasized as an important part of this training. With tactical breathing techniques, police officers can lower their anxiety and stress during live combat operations.

“I challenge each of you trainers to set your standards high in your organization,” said U.S. Marine Col. Darrell Halse, Iraqi Training Advisory Mission – MOI Rule of Law director, during the graduation ceremony. “You are ready to take missions on your own and I am confident you will build on these basics to reach the highest levels.”

Team leader for the Warrant Services Team, Iraqi Police Capt. Mustafa stressed the importance of the training of his team members.

“After attending training like this, our standards

have been raised,” said Mustafa.

As the U.S. mission in Iraq winds down, the Iraqi police officers are taking on the responsibility for professionalizing their forces.

Five suspected terrorists arrested near Joint Base Balad

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION SPEICHER, Iraq – Five suspected terrorists were arrested by Iraqi Security Forces after an indirect fire attack Dec. 8 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

AH-64 Apache helicopters responding to the mid-morning attack observed five individuals burying an improvised launch-rail system at the point of origin of the attack. U.S. forces on the ground questioned and held the individuals until members of the Ishaki Iraqi police arrived. The Ishaki police arrested the individuals on charges of suspected terrorism.

“What we’ve seen recently is irreconcilable criminals using these rail systems to launch rockets at the base,” said Lt. Col. Patrick Cooley, Task Force Marne chief of operations. “The rockets are wildly inaccurate, so it’s a matter of safety for the people who live near the base. It’s good to see the IPs stopping these guys.”

Another aspect to recovering this rail system is the effect it will have on future attacks.

“By taking this rail out of the enemy’s hands, it will degrade his ability to launch future attacks, and it lets them know we are aggressively pursuing them with all available means,” said Col. Jeff Finley, Task Force Marne effects coordinator.

There were no casualties or damage to equipment from the attack. Iraqi Security Forces have the lead in the investigation.

Taji Medical Wing conducts first basic medic training

TAJI, Iraq – For the first time students from the Ministries of Defence and Interior attended and graduated from the combined basic medic course Dec. 5 at Taji, Iraq.

Of the 23 students who completed the course, 14 were MoD, eight were MoI and one was from the Iraqi border police. Throughout the 45-day course, the students learned the skills needed to provide basic medical care on the battlefield.

The graduation marked the latest coordinated effort between MoI and MoD to share the Iraqi Army training facilities and medical resources.

The course is the precursor to the first train-the-trainer class of the year.

“The short term goal of integrating the class is to share resources, which also serves to open lines of communication between the two ministries,” said U.S. Army Capt. Arthur Arieno, Iraq Training and Advising Mission – Army medical adviser. “In the

long term, the Iraqi Police will be better able to apply their recently acquired basic medical skills to better respond to terrorist attacks and save lives of innocent Iraqis."

Students learned basic first aid, litter carrying techniques and clinical skills all within the context of a wartime scenario.

"These skills are so important because these are the same people who will become the first responders when there is a (vehicle-borne improvised explosive device) attack like the ones we witnessed Dec. 8," said Arieno.

Ministry of Defence Human Rights Directorate celebrates four years of progress

 BAGHDAD – The Iraqi Ministry of Defence Human Rights Directorate celebrated its fourth anniversary under its current leadership this week by taking stock of the progress it has made.

Iman Naji, MoD human rights director and her deputy, Iraqi Brig. Gen. Ahmed, have applied the MoD directives regarding human rights mandated by the Iraqi Constitution said U.S. Navy Capt. Gregg Pelowski, senior adviser with Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq.

MoD's efforts in preventing detainee maltreatment, women's progress and missing persons were highlighted during the internationally observed Human Rights Day Dec 10.

"The MoD is building the foundation on which future success will rest," said Pelowski.

The Human Rights Directorate recently completed 50 inspections of MoD detention centers throughout Iraq. Notably the number of MoD detainees has decreased 75 percent since the beginning of the year. There are about 660 detainees as of Dec. 13.

"These facilities have made improvements in documentation and record keeping on detainees, availability of medical service for inmates, and allowing family visits," said Pelowski. "This is all in keeping with the prime ministerial and international standards."

The directorate also runs a missing person's hotline that is tracking 2,000 missing persons. Citizens can match missing family members with those in the data base or report human rights violations.

The MoD human rights program has attracted international attention from such organizations as the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

"While much work is yet to be done, the program is on firm ground and one of which the minister of defence should be proud," said Pelowski.

Iraqi Army base provides support for everything from food to fuel

 MEMONA – A ceremonial ribbon cutting in Maysan province Dec. 10 commemorated the official opening of the Iraqi Army Location Command.

Maysan Province Gov. Muhammad Shia Al Sudani, attended the opening of the new \$35 million Iraqi Army logistics base that will act as a service and supply hub for everything from food to fuel

to the 10th Iraqi Army Division.

Brig. Gen. Hameed, Memona location commander, said, "I appreciate your support talking to the USG contingency there. Our soldiers desperately needed the facility and U.S. Forces made it possible."

Sudani and roughly 250 Iraqi Army Soldiers and local dignitaries toured the base, which will provide all the logistical support for Memona and the surrounding area in the Maysan province.

"The province borders Iran and is critical for future security and stability of Iraq," Maj. Justin Wellen, ITAM adviser.

Established there is a fuel facility with the capacity to store 1.5 million liters of bulk fuel, three vehicle maintenance facilities, a bakery, an ice house and five warehouses that, when they are fully operational, will play a critical support role for the security forces on the border of Iran.

Iraqi Army Location Command's mission is to support the 10th Iraqi Army Division and all regional IA units with fuel, basic vehicle maintenance and bakery products. It also provides storage and conducts distribution operations to area units.

"All life support for 1,000 Soldiers to include lodging, medical, dining facility, water and power stations is contained at the new facility," said Wellen.

ITAM-Army partnered with the Iraqi Army General Depot Command to ensure the division was fully and properly resourced.

"This enables the Location Command to seamlessly support the outlying units," said Wellen.

Maysan Province Gov. Muhammad Shia Al Sudani cut the ceremonial ribbon at the opening of the Memona Location Command.

US Army engineers to deliver Iraqi Navy ship berthing facility

 UM QSAR, Iraq – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is embarking on its first foreign military sales project with Iraq.

The construction of the \$53 million Umm Qasr pier and seawall project, to provide a state-of-the-art berthing facility for the Iraqi Navy in Basra Province, began in October 2008.

Jim Hynum, a construction representative with the USACE Gulf Region South Basra area office, said the state-of-the-art facility will serve the Iraqi Navy for years to come.

"The pier and seawall project will provide a state-of-the-art berthing facility for the Iraqi Navy and support patrol vessels charged with securing the vital port infrastructure and seaways in Iraq's territorial waters," Hynum said. "The project is incorporating the latest marine technology to support the fleet, charged with protecting Iraq's oil infrastructure which is critical to the nation's economic growth and development."

The project was awarded to CCI, an Alaska-based company, who partnered with PolyEarth Construction International and PND Engineers, U.S.-based companies, to provide the construction using open cell technology.

"These companies have a significant history of building similar work in both the northwestern United States and international locations," Hynum said.

"The project includes about 370 meters of Open-Cell® sheetpile," said Sam Pelant, a representative with PolyEarth. "The award winning Open-Cell® sheetpile system, designed by PND engineers, includes a sheetpile seawall pier and a floating pier which will provide additional berths to support new ships ordered by the Iraqi Navy. Both the sheetpile pier and floating pier will

provide state-of-the-art lighting, water, electrical and fuel services for the new vessels.

"New utility services will be added to the pier facility including fuel, electrical and water. A new operational fuel storage facility will be constructed to store 300,000 liters of ship fuel. Shore tie electrical service will be available for berthed vessels, as well as potable water. A security fence and concrete road will be constructed along the face of the pier and down the existing seawall for security and to allow access for service vehicles."

Pelant said there are two aspects of the project that he is particularly proud to point out.

"First: we are very proud of our safety record," Pelant said. "We've gone 427 days without a lost time accident. Considering the complexity of the project, I think that is an admirable achievement."

"The second is Larry Wilson the genius behind the program. We've taken a number of our better Iraqi welders and are working to get them American Welding Society certified. We also have John Houser, a retired construction technologies teacher, mentoring a group of Iraqi construction workers in carpentry and concrete techniques like we do in the states."

Pelant went on to explain that, according to the terms of the contract, 25 percent of their workforce must be Iraqi.

"We have superseded that with a total of 60 percent of the workforce being Iraqi," Pelant said. "The more than 200 Iraqis working for us are completely integrated in all of the work that has taken place and we are very proud of them."

As Iraq strives to build a secure, stable and self-governing nation, the USACE has completed hundreds of projects in the transportation and communication sector. Since 2004, the USACE has completed eight port projects throughout Iraq.

Iraqis donate tools to detainee vocational programs

 CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Detainees will soon begin using brand new tools donated Dec. 7 for the carpentry class at the Taji Theater Internment Facility here.

The tools, donated by the Sunni Endowment, an organization focusing on Sunni mosques and religious issues, will be used by detainees participating in the vocational education program at the facility.

The voluntary program teaches detainees of all faiths a variety of marketable skills designed to help them find jobs after their release. Levels, tape measures, sledge hammers, hacksaws and screwdrivers are among the items donated.

"We donated the tools as a gesture of peace, rebuilding and reintegrating the detainees into productive Iraq citizens," said Shaykh Mahmoud Ali Al-Falahi, president of the Sunni Endowment.

Lt. Col. Richard Johnson, 211th Military Police Battalion commander, said, "The new tools will increase detainee interest and participation as they will be more confident of our commitment to the program and feel better about the quality of their work."

There is a lot of interest in vocational education among detainees, he said, specifically in carpentry, masonry, heating, ventilation and air conditioning and agriculture.

As a class, the detainees are building a jungle gym. The detainees also spend time on individual projects, including benches, tables and chairs.

The VOTECH programs and detainee education programs are a part of the ongoing reintegration efforts provided in U.S. run detention facilities. These facilities and the reintegration capacity are designed to be transferred when the facility is turned over to the Government of Iraq.

Phantom Support



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matthew C. Cooley

Spc. Richard Muniz, a personal security detachment gunner with 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Killeen, Texas, native, watches the area during a mission to the Al Qayyarah water pump Dec. 1 in Al Qayyarah, Iraq.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Anita VandenMolen

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, Oregon National Guard's adjutant general, visited Soldiers and the command staff of the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team Nov. 26 and Nov. 27 in Iraq. Maj. Gen. Rees traveled through Iraq on a 2-day tour. He received mission updates from the commanders. He was given a tour of the vehicles used on the convoy security missions by A Company 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Guardian, at Camp Adder, Iraq.



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

A village in Southern Iraq Dec. 9, photographed from a UH-60 Blackhawk.



U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Fern Freeman

Cpl. Jody Tyson, a truck driver with the 296th Transportation Co., 260th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a of Eclectic, Ala., native, inserts a nasopharyngeal tube into the nose of a mannequin during the combat lifesaver course.



A 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), personal security detachment Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle is staged for a morning mission Nov. 26 at Contingency Operating Location Diamondback, Iraq.

U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matthew C. Cooley