

Vol. II, Issue 7  
December 2009



*in the*  
**ZONE**

## —Table of Contents—

- 3 **From the Top**
- 5 **End of an era**  
Freedom Rest transferred
- 7 **Scout-o-rama**  
Iraqi children learn new skills
- 9 **Building a foundation**  
Secondary school nearly complete
- 11 **Traveling the skies of Iraq**  
JASG's air transportation team
- 13 **Music with a purpose**
- 14 **Neighborhood watch**  
JDOC keeping the IZ safe
- 15 **Chaplain's word**  
Renewal
- 15 **JAG brief**  
Reemployment protection under USERRA
- 17 **Here comes the 72nd**
- 18 **Space to Baghdad**  
Astronauts deliver holiday shout-out
- 19 **Way Outside the Zone: R&R photos**
- 21 **Know where to go**  
Life on the FOBs
- 22 **Around the zone**
- 23 **End zone**  
The last page



With oversight from the U.S. military, an Iraqi construction company has been building the Al Salam Secondary School for Boys in the International Zone. Photo by Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez

### On the Cover:

Service members were able to jump from the high-dive platforms into the pool at Freedom Rest Compound before its transfer to the government of Iraq Dec. 10. Photo by Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez

*in the*  
**ZONE**



*Produced by the Joint Area  
Support Group-Central Public  
Affairs Office*

**JASG-C Commander:**  
Col. Steven Bensend

**JASG-C CSM:**  
Command Sgt. Maj. Edgar Hansen

**JASG-C Public Affairs Officer:**  
Lt. Col. Tim Donovan

**In The Zone editor:**  
Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez

**JASG-C Public Affairs Staff:**  
Capt. Joy LeMay  
Sgt. Frank Merola  
Spc. Tyler Lasure

*In The Zone is published monthly as an electronic news magazine under provisions of AR 360-1, para 3-6 by the Command Directorate's (JASG-C) Command for all military personnel serving in the Operation Iraqi Freedom International Zone. The views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense, the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy or the Marine Corps, or the National Guard Bureau.*

# From the Top

## JASG-C Commander

I write today with mixed emotions. The 32nd JASG-C is nearing the completion of its tour of duty in the IZ. The events and changes since I was in the IZ for my pre-deployment site survey in January 2009 are significant. The changes and shifts yet to come look equally as significant.

It's been an exciting ride so far, but the mission is not complete. So while I feel excited about returning to family and friends, I also harbor an emotion of incompleteness and a feeling of "not done yet." I made many friends and mission partners over the few short months here and I will miss the daily interaction with each of you.

As we close out the year and our mission here, it is important that we remember the significant accomplishments of 2009.

Those accomplishments include the implementation of the Security Agreement and turnover of the Presidential Palace to the GOI. The new U.S. Embassy reached full operating capacity. We reopened the Sunken Highway (Al-Zawra Tunnel) along the northern edge of the IZ. The U.S. forces accomplished "out of the cities by 30 June" without significant impact to security. We turned over almost 80 percent of U.S.-

controlled International Zone property to the Government of Iraq and maintained a secure environment. We accomplished many major construction projects, including transforming Union III to the new home of USF-I Forward and the buildup of Prosperity.

Although we are not yet complete in the consolidation of the IZ into the final three properties, we are making great progress. Early in 2010, LZ Washington operations are scheduled to transition to the new pad being constructed at LZ Fernandez.

There are many, many more accomplishments, but they are far too numerous to mention. None of these accomplishments were possible without the herculean efforts of multiple organizations, leaders, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and civilians working toward a common and focused commander's intent. Thank you for your amazing work and attention to detail.

The 72nd IBCT/JASG-C command group and HHC arrived just prior to Christmas and the 72nd's soldiers are busily working to learn their new jobs.

Please join me in welcoming COL Mark Campsey and his team of Texans to our area of operations. Their Texas "T" is a



Col. Steven Bensed  
Commander  
Joint Area Support Group—Central

welcome sight for the Red Arrow soldiers of the 32nd.

This is my last commander's column for "In the Zone." Please allow me to relay to you how humbled and honored I feel to have served with each one of you. I have never worked with a group of more professional people in my 32 years of service. We had several rough and challenging times, but in every case solutions were found and implemented, the mission was accomplished, and the team focused on the next challenge. I am so very proud of each of you and wish you well in the future.

I know that the 32nd IBCT/JASG-C is a better unit for having worked with the organizations and people here in Iraq. Thank you for your service and the support you gave my team here in the International Zone.

"FORWARD"

# JASG-C Command Sergeant Major

I wish everyone across the International Zone, Baghdad, Iraq a very merry and safe Christmas. I also wish that your 2010 is your best year ever. Happy New Year!

Thanks to everyone who has helped make this a great year and a successful mission. I am not sure where the time has gone and in the parlance of Vietnam, we, the 32nd JASG-C are “one-digit midgets.” We are very short. It seems like yesterday we landed at BIAP and then flew into LZ Washington to replace the 50th from New Jersey.

Now, soldiers from the 72nd IBCT out of Texas are here to take on the mission of the Joint Area Support Group. It is time—time for Red Arrow soldiers to head stateside, back to Wisconsin and the winter wonderland we call home.

However, before we depart this holiday season, now is a good opportunity to reflect on the past year. It is time to think about the mission we took on from the 50th and are preparing to pass on to the 72nd. The IZ has changed and is

now a much different place than when we arrived and will soon center on the New Embassy Complex, Union III and FOB Prosperity. The evolution of the IZ has marched on with 20 properties turned over to the government of Iraq. However, the most important aspect of that number is the amount of work done to make it happen. It took many thousands of people working in concert to make it a reality. We could not have done it without you.

I would like to thank all the Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, Marines and civilian enablers for your excellent work, support and contributions to accomplishing the mission.

The JASG-C worked closely with MNF-I, MNC-I, MNSTC-I (now called USF-I); the Department of State; the U.S. Embassy; the Department of Defense; KBR; Triple Canopy and contractors of all sorts... the list goes on, but the mission remains the same: the transfer of the International Zone back to the government of Iraq.



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

I would also like to thank our Iraqi friends and partners for their efforts. We have made great progress accomplishing this mission, but it is not complete. We leave that in the hands of the soldiers of the 72nd and you, our partners and friends across the International Zone. We ask that you give the 72nd the same level of support and cooperation that you gave us. I know you will.

Again, thank you for all you have done, this is my last tour and in many ways the best. You made it easy!

Stay safe. One team, one fight!



A view of Deer Lake at FOB Prosperity. Photo by Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez

# End of an era

## Freedom Rest transferred



A roof-top view of Freedom Rest Compound—the 20th property transferred by Joint Area Support Group since the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team took command in May. Photos by Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez

*By Capt. Joy LeMay*

The transfer of Freedom Rest Compound from the U.S. government to the government of Iraq Dec. 10 marked the 20th property turnover by Joint Area Support Group—Central since the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team took command in May.

A small ceremony was held to recognize the property turnover, one of the last turnovers the 32nd Brigade will conduct before the 72nd Brigade takes command of the JASG mission in early January.

“I’m very proud of everything my team has accomplished and the JASG has accomplished since we’ve been here,” said Col. Martin Seifer, the JASG’s director of installations and head of the



Col. Martin Seifer (seated at far left), the JASG’s director of installations and head of the IZ transition team, returns Freedom Rest Compound to Mr. Sameer Al-Haddad (seated center), Secretariat of the Committee for Receiving Real Properties and Camps Office of the Prime Minister, at a ceremony held Dec. 10.



Volleyball courts located at Freedom Rest.



Sgt. 1st Class Sandra McIntosh, final mayor of Freedom Rest Compound.

International Zone transition team. “We’ve given back a lot of properties in the International Zone for the betterment of the government of Iraq and the people of Iraq. They’ll be able to take these facilities that they’ve been given, which are fully functional, and move forward in a manner of using

them for government facilities or other duties.”

The transfer of 11.1 acres of property to the Iraqi government included 19 buildings, two swimming pools, tennis and volleyball courts, a soccer field, and the former Saber dog kennels and Strategic Counterintelligence Directorate Compound.

Since 2003, Freedom Rest Compound was a rest and recuperation facility for U.S. military personnel to relax during a four-day pass. The facility offered troops a movie theater, a video game room, a music room, concerts and numerous other activities to help them unwind and forget about the stress of combat.

The future of the property is uncertain. However, government officials hope to make Freedom Rest available to the Iraqi public.

“It’s sad to see it go, because it’s for the soldiers,” said Sgt. 1st Class Sandra McIntosh, the final mayor of the compound. “It’s the end of an era, but the beginning of something else.” ■



A wading pool within the compound has a running fountain and slides.



# Scout-o-rama

## Iraqi children learn new skills

*By Spc. Tyler Lasure*

The laughter of children are not a common sound in the International Zone, but thanks to a coalition effort the laughter of children was heard Dec. 10.

About 150 boys and 50 teachers

from the Iraqi elementary and secondary schools for boys in the IZ attended a scouting event sponsored by U.S. service members and civilians and the Iraqi Federal Police and the Baghdad Fire Department.

Students enjoyed learning

classic scouting skills such as first aid, knot tying, land navigation, team building and how to make an impromptu shelter.

The event was aimed at familiarizing students and teachers with scouting. "More importantly I think the teachers are taking something from this," said Sgt. 1st Class Chris Donovan, an assistant Cubmaster in Wisconsin and the main organizer of the event.

"Scouting is supposed to be part of the school's curriculum, and they have talked a lot about wanting to do this on their own but not having the resources to do it. So we gathered resources from all across the International Zone, from all the different countries involved, and brought the resources together for them to experience this. And, I think the teachers will take this forward. That's our hope."

The students and teachers weren't the only ones who enjoyed the event.

"It's great, I like working with the kids here," said Spc. Coady Schiltz, a member of the Joint Area Support Group—Central personal security detail who volunteered for the



David E. Greer, a volunteer from Provincial Reconstruction Team-Baghdad Central, teaches an Iraqi student basic knot-tying skills at a scouting event held Dec. 10.

The event was aimed at familiarizing teachers and students with scouting. *Photos by Spc. Tyler Lasure*



Sgt. 1st Class Chris Donovan helps a group of Iraqi boys pass a board during a team-building exercise. The goal of the team building station was to have the children work together toward a common goal.

event. "I get to work back home at a Boy Scout camp; so being able to come here and really help these kids and mold them, it's real fun. It's a good thing."

The culture in Iraq might be different, but the Iraqi children

who participated in the event enjoyed the same scouting activities as U.S. children.

"I think this is a great example of no matter where you are in the world kids are kids. Scouts here in Iraq are doing the same tasks they are doing back in the States," Donovan said. "One of the telling points was when we were in the school meeting with the teachers and the principal we asked them 'What type of scouting events would you guys like to do?' and they named everything that we do at our fall jamborees or camporees back in the States. It was great to find out that kids here are doing the same thing kids are back home."

For volunteers it was also a reminder of loved ones back home.

"I wish that I could be home with my kids doing this," said Sgt. 1st Class Terrance Marsh, the noncommissioned officer in charge of anti-terrorism and force



Sgt. 1st Class Terrance Marsh helps a group of Iraqi children during a game of tug-of-war. The game was part of the team-building station.

protection for the JASG who helped organize the event. "But since I'm not home with my kids, I'm more than happy to come here and organize this for the Iraqi children." ■



Petty Officer 2nd Class Armando Rodriguez demonstrates how a fire extinguisher works during a fire safety class at the Boy Scout event Dec. 10.

# Building a foundation

## Secondary school nearly complete

By Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez

As U.S. forces withdraw from Iraq and return control to the Iraqi government, rebuilding the nation's infrastructure falls on the Iraqi people.

With the guidance of U.S. service members, Iraqi contractors are building the foundations of the sovereign nation one project at a time.

One such project—the Al Salam Secondary School for Boys located in central Baghdad near the 215 Apartments—broke



Iraqi workers lay mortar and bricks Oct. 24 to build a classroom wall for the Al Salam Secondary School for Boys. U.S. service members have been overseeing the construction done by Iraqi workers. Photos by Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez



Iraqi construction workers keep the foundation wet of the Al Salam Secondary School for Boys May 25. Construction began after a ground-breaking ceremony held April 2009.



Far left: Lt. Cmdr. Ernest Woodward, Department of Public Works Team 1 officer in charge, inspects the braces supporting the school's roof during construction Oct. 24.

Left: An Iraqi worker applies the finishing touches to the outside of a window Oct. 24.



Iraqi workers align rebar on the roof of a school building Oct. 24.

ground in April and is on track to be completed next year.

Funding for the school was provided entirely by the Commander's Emergency Response Fund, a program designed to fund projects for the health and welfare of the Iraqi population.

The U.S. military awarded the construction contract to a local contractor and has provided Iraqis with oversight during construction.

"Building the school

and seeing it go from plans to reality has been one of the highlights of my deployment," said Air Force Capt. Michelle Sterling, a project manager who performed construction oversight until June 2009.

The secondary school currently shares the primary school building in the 215 Apartments. As a result, both schools run shortened school days.

Once construction of Al Salam Secondary School is completed, the school's six buildings will include 18 classrooms and six lab rooms that will occupy sixth through twelfth-grade students. ■



# Traveling the skies of Iraq

## JASG's air transportation team



**Spc. Melissa Helton, flight operations specialist, escorts travelers to their helicopter.** Photos by Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez

*By Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez*

Grabbing a taxi, bus or train to get somewhere is not possible for military and U.S. personnel in Iraq. The safest and sometimes only way to travel is by air.

The air transportation team on Forward Operating Base Prosperity plans, coordinates and implements rotary-wing aircraft missions to ensure travel for military personnel and civilians in the International Zone is efficient, effective and safe.

“In this country, travel is not anything like what we experience in the U.S.,” said Master Sgt. Dean Muller, noncommissioned officer in charge of the section. “Travel by ground here is dangerous and sometimes just simply not feasible,” Muller said.

The air transportation team also includes Maj. James Beehler, the transportation officer, and Spc. Melissa Helton, the flight operations specialist. Together they manifest travelers on flights—which



Spc. Melissa Helton and a door gunner from an aviation unit stationed at Joint Base Balad discuss the day's mission.

involves coordinating missions with an aviation unit at Joint Base Balad, calculating the distance helicopters travel to ensure they have enough fuel, monitoring the weather conditions throughout the day, tracking flights, and ensuring the flight crew gets enough rest time between flights.

"There are a variety of missions in air transportation that require us as a section—and me as a flight operations specialist—to remain flexible," Helton said. "That's what I love about this mission. There's



Maj. James Beehler, officer in charge, updates a flight manifest.

never a dull moment."

Weather conditions test the section's adaptability on a regular basis.

"It's a challenge to accomplish required flights when the weather is questionable," Muller stated. "Safety measures are in place to protect the assets, the crews and the passengers. Over time, you adapt to the weather with patience and flexibility."

Remaining adaptable is a skill that allows the section to accomplish their mission and as a result, helps travelers accomplish their tasks.

"By managing the transportation, travelers are able to continue conducting the business they need to accomplish during the process of helping this country grow and prosper," Muller said. ■



Master Sgt. Dean Muller, noncommissioned officer in charge, annotates changes to the flight manifest.

# Music with a purpose

**By Sgt. 1st Class Scott D. Turner,**  
*Multi-National Force Iraq Combined  
Press Information Center*

The sound of seasonal favorites filled the air of the British Embassy during a Christmas concert held Dec. 22 where more than 130 attendees included guests from embassies throughout Baghdad, Iraqi officials and businessmen.

The concert, performed by America's Corps Army Band—the official United States Army Band of Multi-National Corps—Iraq—was part of a series that began in 2002 by Karim Wasfi, a cellist and co-conductor for the Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra.

Wasfi's intent of performing Western music is to bridge artificial barriers between conflict mitigation and reconciliation.

Music has several major purposes, Wasfi said, including resolving disagreements through music; bridging the gap that was created due to political instability; and fighting against ignorance toward the refinement, cultivation and civilized approach to life.

The initiative, in conjunction with the etiquette and civic training, will instill some of the key factors necessary for national unity at different levels, Wasfi said.

"Performance outreach

will aid in instilling a sense of pride and ownership in Iraq by both the performers as well as the audience," Wasfi added.

For a more united Iraq, key factors that must be considered are individual self-esteem and self-worth to include equalization of students among themselves from all races, genders, creeds, colors, religious backgrounds, or social standing and ownership of individual civic responsibilities—all of which contribute to a national unity at the grass roots level. All this will begin with the next voting

generation and the next generation from which leaders will be drawn, Wasfi said.

"This is a cultural event designed to promote peace through the arts," said Suzanne Easton, culture and protocol attaché. "We hope to drown them in cultural events. Culture unites, politics divides," Easton said.

Iraqis want to live ordinary lives, enjoy themselves and get beyond the point of hostilities by sharing and playing music. It's a great way to bridge any differences, Easton said. ■



Sgt. Robert Lawson, Sgt. 1st Class Charles Curry, Staff Sgt. Tim Poth, Staff Sgt. Jim Wrex, trombone players from America's Corps Army Band warm up prior to the concert Dec. 22.  
*U.S. Army photos by Sgt. 1st Class Scott D. Turner, Multi-National Force Iraq Combined Press Information Center*

# Neighborhood watch

## JDOC keeping the IZ safe



Members of the JDOC keep a watchful eye over the IZ. A quiet JDOC means a peaceful IZ. Photos by Spc. Tyler Lasure

By Spc. Tyler Lasure

When there is something strange in the neighborhood, residents of the International Zone know exactly who to call, no not the Ghost Busters—they call the Joint Defense Operations Center.

“We are the 411 and the 911 of the IZ,” said Sgt. 1st Class Chris Corbin, the noncommissioned officer in charge of a shift in the JDOC.

The JDOC keeps a watchful eye on the IZ 24 hours a day. “We utilize our assets that we have in the IZ to respond to, get reports on and report to higher anything that happens in the IZ, whether it be an explosion or a water main breaking,” said 2nd Lt. Jonathan Meyer, a battle captain for the JDOC.



Air Force Staff Sgt. Alan Rock, the IZ Police liaison, watches for disturbances in the IZ. The IZ Police is just one of the many organizations that operate in the JDOC.

Within the JDOC are representatives of KBR, Triple Canopy, the IZ Police, and the C-RAM operations. The JDOC also works with Iraqi forces on a regular basis. “Next door we have the JOC (Joint Operations Center), we work directly with the 56th IA (Iraqi Army) Brigade to coordinate the defense of the IZ and the manning of ECPs,” said Maj. Ryan Brown, chief of operations for the JDOC. “We also track



Sgt. 1st Class Chris Corbin, a shift noncommissioned officer in charge, monitors the IZ.

all of the important GOI officials that come and go from the IZ.”

During distinguished visitor visits, the JDOC has worked with many different agencies. “We have worked with RSO (Regional Security Office), Secret Service, and

PSDs to coordinate security and movement through the IZ. Really our main tasks are keeping the IZ secure but ensuring the freedom of movement within the IZ,” Brown said.

Working with such highly visible situations keeps the members of the JDOC busy, but it is also rewarding. “I think one of the really neat aspects of working here is that there is rarely a month that goes by where we don’t have a day where we are working an issue inside this JDOC that doesn’t end up in a national paper somewhere,” Brown said. “You definitely know what you are doing is important.”

It isn’t about the visibility for the service members in the JDOC though. “I like knowing what’s going on,” Meyer said. “I like knowing that the decisions that I make or are made here help the mission and could potentially save lives.”

But the best time for residents of the IZ is when the JDOC doesn’t make the news.

“It’s good for us when things are quiet here because that means nothing bad is going on out there,” Meyer said. ■

## Renewal

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



Romans 12:2 – “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the **renewing** of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Reintegration. One word filled with incredible meaning...and

emotion.

Merriam-Webster defines reintegration “to renew...to reinstate”. I like that meaning because it describes what I look forward to the most during my reintegration...renewing my body, mind and spirit... and reinstating myself into life in my family, my friends, my world back home.

Many look at the deployment as complete once they leave the demobilization station—Fort McCoy. But the reality is the hardest work has just begun—the ability to renew and reinstate into normal life once again.

It’s not unusual after a deployment that the soldier feels a bit strange or uncomfortable going home. We are after all entering into new territory! Sure the home may be in the same place, but things have changed in that space. The people in that home are different. They have grown older and probably more independent, even the little ones who before we left couldn’t walk...are now flying around with a new freedom! Our spouse has had to make decisions without us and they have grown more self-determining. Our children haven’t been able to seek

out our wisdom in the manner they would have liked and have therefore learned to get answers they needed in different ways...from different people. Our friends may seem different as well. Their lives have moved on and we have not been there. Even our relationship with our pet may be different as we have not been there to pet them, exercise them, play with them. The same may be true at work as well...new faces, new responsibilities, new supervisors, etc.

However, all this change doesn’t have to be viewed as a negative, but as prospects to grow upon. We can see the new found freedom in the relationships of our lives as new opportunities. Spouses will want to “renew” the relationship all over again! What a great time to renegotiate responsibilities and talk over where we slowly want to change things together! Our children will want to reconnect and will be looking for reassurance from us once again. Our co-workers and friends will want to “reinstate” the relationship and learn about our experiences, just like we will want to hear what has been happening in their life! Even our pets will want to renew the love we once gave and received from them.

Reintegration is a great time to “renew” and “reinstate” yourself into life once again back home... slowly. And if things go a little rough, be patient and remember you have great resources to assist you... including the chaplains around the state.

Look forward to seeing you at Phase I and may God’s Blessings flow upon you in the New Year...with new possibilities!

### JAG brief

## Reemployment protections under USERRA

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



As our deployment draws to an end, many service members are thinking about a well-deserved break and then returning to their civilian jobs. The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act of 1994 (USERRA) provides reemployment

rights, preserves benefits, and employment protections. Specifically, under USERRA, service members are entitled to prompt reinstatement of a civilian job upon release from active duty. USERRA’s provisions apply to both voluntary and involuntary military duty.

There are, however, prerequisites in order for USERRA’s job reinstatement provisions to apply:

More 

1. The service member must have held a civilian job. The job reinstatement provisions do not apply to temporary jobs or independent contractors.
2. The service member must have given advance notice of the military service to his/her employer.
3. The service member's absence from his/her job must have been necessitated by his/her military service.
4. The period of military service must be less than five cumulative years while working for said employer.
5. The service member's characterization of service must be honorable or general under honorable conditions. USERRA's protections do not apply if the service member receives an other than honorable, dishonorable, or bad conduct discharge or if the service member was AWOL and dropped from the rolls.
6. The service member must report back to work in a timely manner. The length of military service determines the timeframe by which a service member must report back to work. If the period of military duty is greater than or equal to 181 days, the service member has 90 days under USERRA to report back to work or submit a request or application for reemployment. This time period starts on day of discharge stated on the service member's DD214.

When a service member meets these prerequisites, he/she is entitled to protections under USERRA, including:

1. *Prompt reemployment.* This need not be the actual job the service member previously held, but it must be an equivalent position.
  2. *Training.* If the service member is no longer qualified for that position, the employer must make reasonable efforts to train and qualify him/her for the position.
  3. *Seniority and the "escalator principle."* The service member accrues seniority and upon reemployment steps back on the "seniority escalator" as if continuously employed during the military duty.
- Accordingly, upon reemployment, the service member is entitled to that accrued seniority and other rights and benefits determined by seniority.
4. *Pension benefits.* Similar to the escalator principle, upon reemployment, the service member is entitled to pension benefits as if continuously employed during his/her military service. Time performing military service counts toward pension time requirements and the service member is entitled to contribute to his/her pension plan based on the amount he/she could have contributed had he/she remained in continuous employment.
  5. *Health insurance coverage.* If the employer offers a health insurance benefit, the employer must promptly reinstate health insurance coverage for the service member and any previously covered family members.
  6. *Special protection.* Upon reemployment, service members are protected from discharge for a period of time. If the service member's absence exceeded 180 days, the employer may only discharge the service member "for cause" within a one year period of time. Generally, "for cause" is misconduct, such as tardiness or insubordination.

USERRA contains other protections and limitations and each service member's situation is unique. While a Judge Advocate can provide information, he/she cannot represent a service member on USERRA issues. The primary points of contract for USERRA-related issues are:

- Employer Support of Guard and Reserve (ESGR) 1-800-336-4590 or (608) 242-3169 and [www.ESGR.org](http://www.ESGR.org)
- Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) 1-866-4-USA-DOL or (608) 266-3110 and [www.dol.gov/dol/vets](http://www.dol.gov/dol/vets)

You can find a sample reinstatement letter and additional USERRA information on the JASG-C Command Judge Advocate Web site at: <https://mnfi.intranet.iraq.centcom.mil/sites/JASG/CJA/default.aspx>



# Here comes the 72nd

Soldiers assigned to the Texas National Guard's Houston-based 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team arrive in the International Zone shortly before Christmas. *Photos by Spc. Tyler Lasure*

As the month of December and the year 2009 were winding down Dec. 31, so too was the 32nd Infantry Brigade



1st Lt. Michael Yawn, waits in line to get his room and linen.

Combat Team's eight-month mission as Joint Area Support Group-Central in Baghdad's International Zone. A week or so into the new decade, the Red Arrow troops who have run the JASG since May 27 will be heading home, and a new JASG will pick up the mission.

The Texas National Guard's Houston-based 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team arrived in the IZ shortly before Christmas and is midway through its relief in place with the 32nd.

Like the 32nd, only the 72nd Brigade's headquarters will operate the vital JASG mission. The 72nd's other 2,900 soldiers are assigned to 21 company-sized units performing a variety of missions—security force,

detainee operations and convoy security, to name a few—throughout Iraq.

"Our friends in the Wisconsin National Guard's 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team have done a superb job during their time here in Iraq," the 72nd's commander, Col. Mark Campsey, wrote in a Christmas message to Texas. "Their hospitality and efforts to smooth our transition into the mission are a tribute to their leadership and professionalism."

The 32nd Brigade soldiers wish their Texas replacements well.

If the attention, preparation and enthusiasm of the 72nd's troops are any indication, the Texans will do a great job in the IZ, picking up the JASG mission and moving it successfully into the new year. ■



# Space to Baghdad

## Astronauts deliver holiday shout-out

Soldiers stationed at Forward Operating Base Prosperity receive holiday greetings from crew members aboard International Space Station Expedition 22 Dec. 29. Photo by Sgt. Melissa Shaw

By Sgt. Melissa Shaw

Holiday greetings to U.S. troops serving abroad often come in the form of a home video sent by family members or a recording from their commanding general thanking them for their sacrifice and service during this time of year.

Usually, soldiers receive care packages filled with holiday goodies. However, on Dec. 29, about 20 soldiers stationed at Forward Operating Base Prosperity received a different kind of holiday greeting.

Crew members aboard International Space Station Expedition 22 delivered a remote holiday shout-out through American Forces Network and NASA via a



Retired Army Col. Jeff Williams (left) and Army Col. Timothy Creamer (right) answer questions posed by troops during a question and answer session Dec. 29 at FOB Prosperity. Photo by Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez

two-way satellite connection.

Floating 220 miles above the Earth, Army Col. Timothy Creamer and retired Army Col. Jeff Williams, flight commander for Expedition 22, thanked the troops for their service, shared their own experiences in the military and participated in a short question and answer session.

Questions included how astronauts kept their morale and how many space walks the crew members had been able to participate in.

Master Sgt. Dennis Schrull, an employee of the Johnson Space Center in Houston deployed with the 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, focused his question on whether or not the astronauts had fixed the water filtration and recycling system.

"Oh, well we haven't quite got that fixed yet," Creamer said.

"But if you mean to ask what



Master Sgt. Dennis Schrull, 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, waits for members aboard International Space Station Expedition 22 to answer a question he asked during a two-way video link Dec. 29 at Forward Operating Base Prosperity. Photo by Sgt. Melissa Shaw

have we done with our urine? Well the shuttle has sleeping areas for six of us but there are only five on board so we are using that as one of our storage areas. You know, I guess it's only fair we tell the future inhabitants where we have been keeping it."

While the laughter eventually died down and the satellite feed ended not long after that, the feeling of elation at being able to share holiday greetings with the crew members of the ISS was something unique and special these soldiers will not soon forget. ■

# Way outside THE ZONE

## Editor's note

In this issue, *Outside the Zone* uses R&R photos from 32nd Brigade soldiers who traveled to places such as Australia, Ireland, Qatar or home to Wisconsin.

## R&R photos

Chief Warrant Officer Debra Letexier at a Brewers game with her youngest daughter and her Dad.



Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez visited the Pearl and Oyster fountain in Doha, Qatar.



Above: Sgt. Beth Hanaman toured downtown Mannheim, Germany.



Maj. Lee Jones at the Cliffs of Moher, Ireland.



Maj. Thomas Hinman took his girls on their first hunting trip.



1st Lt. Kate Furtak and 2nd Lt. Christine Kramer at a *futbol* game in Argentina.

Sgt. Carl Seim and fiancée Sarah Elizabeth Huss at Church in the Meadows, Germany.



Maj. Brian Leahy fishing in Wisconsin with his family.



Sgt. Frank Merola with his girlfriend, Valerie, on a boat tour in Hawaii.



Sgt. Michael J. Feller poses with a camel at the Persian Gulf.



Staff Sgt. Elisha Higgins cuddles up to a kangaroo in Australia.



Sgt. 1st. Class Glenda Bush on her way back to Baghdad from her four-day pass.



Spc. Jennifer Zay pries open the jaws of an alligator statue during her trip to Australia.

# Know where to go *Life on the FOBs*

## **Common Access Cards**

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

## **TMC**

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

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

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

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

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



## **Dining facility**

The Prosperity dining facility across from the Palace (Bldg. 100) offers four

meals a day with Grab-n-go options between meal hours. Meal hours are:

Breakfast: 0600 to 0830  
*Grab-n-go: 0830 to 1100*  
Lunch: 1130 to 1330  
*Grab-n-go: 1330 to 1700*  
Dinner: 1730 to 2000  
*Grab-n-go: 2000 to 2230*  
Midnight Meal: 2230 to 0100  
*Grab-n-go: 0100 to 0530*

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

Breakfast: 0530 to 0800  
Lunch: 1130 to 1330  
Dinner: 1730 to 2000  
Midnight meal: 2330 to 0100

## **Gym/MWR**

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

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

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

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

## **Post office**

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

Items forbidden to be shipped include weapons items, drugs, alcohol, and perishable material. For a com-

plete list of items, consult CENTCOM AR 25-200 or HRSC Policy 07-26.

FOB Prosperity: Located at the west entrance of the Palace. The hours are **0900 to 1700 Monday through Friday.**

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

## **Laundry**

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

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



## **Finance**

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

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

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

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

# around the zone



Petty Officer 2nd Class Marikit Johnson emerges from a baptism tub after her baptism at FOB Prosperity's chapel Dec. 12. *Photo by Spc. Tyler Lasure*

Adm. Michael G. Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, addresses members of the media at the Combined Press Information Center at FOB Prosperity Dec. 18. *Photo by Spc. Timothy Popp, 318th Public Affairs Operation Center*



JASG soldiers gather Dec. 17 at Prosperity's chapel to record Christmas videos to send to Wisconsin TV stations. *Photo by Capt. Joy LeMay*



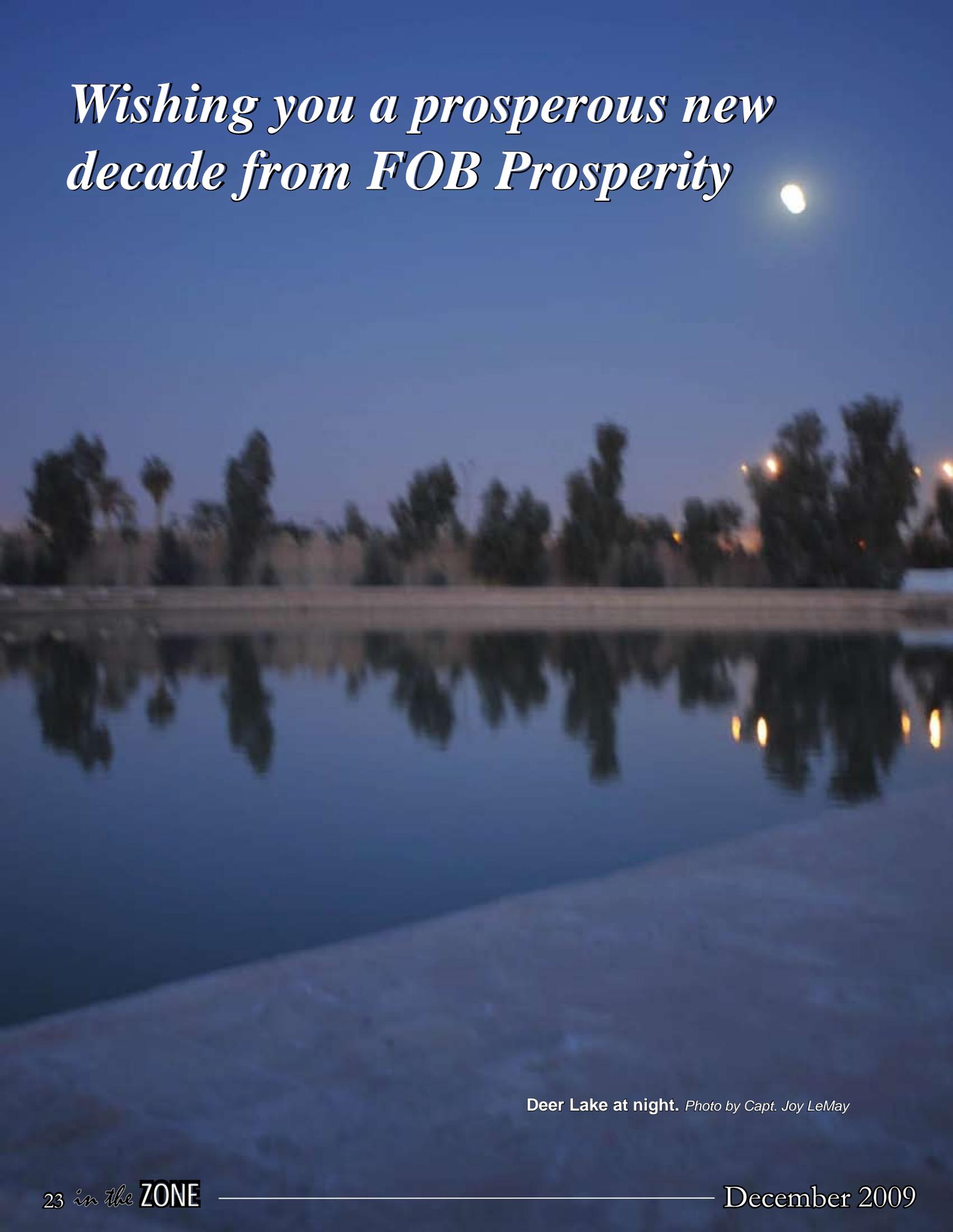
Air Force Staff Sgt. Donald Summerhays, a mail room noncommissioned officer, organizes care packages coming into Prosperity. *Photo by Capt. Joy LeMay*



*Merry Christmas*

*and Happy New Year!!*

*Wishing you a prosperous new  
decade from FOB Prosperity*



Deer Lake at night. Photo by Capt. Joy LeMay