

Victory Times



Telling the United States Forces - Iraq story

Vol. V, Issue 14

June 14, 2010



1775-2010
ARMY BIRTHDAY Celebrating
235 years
Army Strong
June 14

The banner features a dark background with a row of red stars at the top and several large blue stars. On the left is the U.S. Army logo (a yellow star in a square with 'U.S. ARMY' below it). On the right is the official Army seal. The text '1775-2010' is in white, 'ARMY BIRTHDAY' is in large yellow letters, 'Celebrating 235 years' is in white script, 'Army Strong' is in white script, and 'June 14' is in white.

Engaged leadership is key to mission success

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Roger Dey
United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs

Thanks in large part to the development and capability of the Iraq's Security Forces, U.S. troops continue to move closer to a change in mission, transitioning from combat to stability operations.

While the manner in which the U.S. military conducts missions will continue to evolve, focusing more on advising, assisting and training, Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence K. Wilson, United States Forces-Iraq command sergeant major, said the professionalism of its service members must remain consistent, and

engaged leadership is one of the main factors.

"Standards, discipline and quality leadership will always stay constant across the board," Wilson said.

Wilson was with the 4th Infantry Division in Iraq in 2003 and 2004. Since then, he has watched as disciplined and well-trained small units guided the Iraqi Security Forces to the point where they can secure their own country.

"Tactically and operationally, small units on the ground have made the difference," Wilson said. "They need to understand what they've done at their level has gotten us to the strategic place where we are today."

At the battalion level, Maj. Damien Garner, operations officer for the 317th Military Police Battalion, which has command and control over military police transition teams in the Tikrit area, sees the impact that involved leaders can have on the ability to keep Soldiers focused on their military bearing and on the mission at hand.

"If you're not the guy interacting, a lot of times you're going to lose the focus of 'why am I doing this?'" he said. "It's the responsibility of the chain of command to keep Soldiers aware that they are doing an important job ... and that what we're

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Chaplain's Corner

Learn to enjoy life by not asking why

By Chaplain (Lt. Cmdr.) Marcus Lawrence
USF-I Chaplain

There was a funeral for a 26 year-old woman. She was driving too fast, hit a patch of ice, and crashed her vehicle. She was killed instantly.

Her parents, especially her father, were devastated. She was his pride and joy, his only child, and he hurt like he had never hurt before. Finally, at the insistence of his wife, he worked through his pain with a counselor. He began to emerge from the black pit of despair.

One day he said, "For the last year, I have been hurting like I never hurt before. In the midst of that hurt, I discovered that my worst enemy was not a person, but a word. And that word is 'Why? Why? Why?'"

"After all the hurt I went through, I made the greatest discovery of my life and that is that life was meant to be good, life was meant to be enjoyed - life was not meant to be figured out."

None of us are invincible, and one of the most difficult things to do is to find the good that God has in store for us when we are experiencing pain. All of us are ready for something good to happen to us, and God wants us to experience the good in life just as he did years ago, when the prophet Jeremiah said:

"For I know the plans I have for you' says the Lord. 'They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.'" — *Jeremiah 29:11*

One interesting thing in Scripture is that it tells is like it is. The Bible does not try to polish up the image of its heroes nor does it try to gloss over their shortcomings. The Bible always presents its characters with flaws and all.

That is why Elijah is presented as a frightened prophet who ran out into the wilderness and hid from the wrath of a woman named Jezebel.

That is why David is presented as a man willing to lie, cheat, and murder to cover up his adulterous affair with Bathsheba.

That is why the Apostle Peter was presented as a man who would deny his Lord when he thought that he, too, might be arrested.

Even the greatest people in the Bible experienced problems and encountered difficulties in life. They discovered heartaches and fears, were overcome with self-pity and eventually found themselves asking "why?"

Perhaps you have been hurt, experienced heartache or some kind of paralyzing fear. Perhaps you have asked "why?"

That is the one question God does not always answer. We ask why because we are not happy and there is the temptation to argue. We are looking for an argument knowing no answer will be the right one. To learn to accept, sometimes in complete surrender, and to avoid asking "why" will enable you to discover the good that God has planned for you in your life.

Complete surrender, is one way to discover just how much more God has designed for you to enjoy in life.

SARC Smarts



Those who are victimized by sexual assault can report the incident one of two ways: they can file an unrestricted or restricted report, the latter of which protects the anonymity of the victim and does not lead to a criminal investigation. Of the 2,923 reports of sexual assault in fiscal 2008, 2,280 were unrestricted, while 643 were restricted.

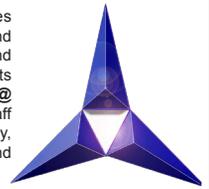
Call the USF-I Deployed Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (DSARC) at 485-5085 or 435-2235 for help. Army members should seek assistance with their Unit Victim Advocate (UVA) or DSARC.



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An open letter to USF-I from Gen. Odierno

To the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and Civilians of United States Forces-Iraq:

On March 7, 2010, Iraq conducted successful national elections deemed credible and legitimate in the eyes of Iraqi citizens and those of the international community.

Despite extremist intent to disrupt the elections, record numbers of Iraqis exercised their right to vote, buoyed by faith in the democratic process and the competence of the Iraqi Security Forces.

The certification of the election results endured politically-motivated challenges, including a ballot recount, which only served to confirm the validity of the election process. Planned, prepared and executed by Iraqis for Iraqis, these elections mark a new era in Iraq's history. The Iraqi people have again resoundingly rejected extremism and demonstrated their hope and conviction in a brighter future.

Your efforts in improving security—through training, advising, enabling and partnering with Iraqi Security Forces—have provided the foundation upon which Iraqis are choosing and constructing their future.

Because of our success, Iraq is able to take the next step of forming the next national government.

We expect security challenges as extremist organizations attempt to thwart Iraq's progress. With our Iraqi partners in the lead, we will remain vigilant and prevail.

Throughout the remainder of 2010, we will support the national transition, engaging with new national leaders while simultaneously supporting ongoing provincial and local good-governance efforts aimed at improving the lives of all Iraqis.

We have a time of great opportunity ahead of us.

In accordance with our responsible drawdown and indicative of Iraq's progress, we will end combat operations and establish a transition force of Advisory and Assistance Brigades by September 1, 2010.

At this important juncture OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM will end and OPERATION NEW DAWN will begin.

With this change, our commitment to the Iraqi people will remain steadfast and we will not waiver in our support.

The time is right; the Iraqi Security Forces are ready to assume full responsibility for their internal defense.

This by no means suggests we are finished.

After September 1, 2010, we will continue to conduct partnered counter-terrorism operations and provide combat enablers to help the Iraqi Security Forces maintain pressure on the extremist networks.

Our primary mission will remain to train and advise Iraqi Security Forces, as well as support Provincial Reconstruction Teams, the United Nations and other non-governmental organizations dedicated to building Iraqi capacity.

Through unity of effort with our civilian partners, orchestrated by the US ambassador and his team, we will continue to enable Iraq to succeed.

We will continue to operate in a complex environment, certainly facing challenges that will require continued ingenuity, flexibility and adaptability—traits demonstrated every day by our service members and civilians.

Given the courage, compassion and commitment of all who have served and who continue to serve here, Iraq is on a path toward our combined goals of a sovereign, stable, self-reliant Iraq with just, representative and accountable government that contributes to peace and stability in the region.

I remain humbled and honored to serve in your ranks as we continue to support Iraq in establishing its future.

With respect and admiration,



Raymond T. Odierno
General, US Army
Commanding



First class of Iraqi field artillery officers graduate

Story and photo by
Sgt. 1st Class Roger Dey
United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs

A blown circuit shut down the air conditioners in what was once a mess hall for Republican Guard troops, and left 120 Iraqi Army lieutenants sweating in their uniforms as they waited to make history, June 6.

This was the first class to graduate from the Iraqi Army Field Artillery School's Officer Basic Course and a little extra heat was not about to stop them from reaching their goals.

The 152 day course, held at a new training facility near the city of Abu Ghraib, gave the officers the fundamentals of field artillery doctrine, tactics and organization, according to Lt. Col. Patrick Martin, the senior U.S. Army advisor to the Field Artillery School and Directorate.

Martin, from Flower Mound, Texas, was impressed by the strides made by the young officers as they went through the training.

"I got to see these officers perform in their forward observer positions, their fire direction positions and on the gun line," Martin said. "They performed extremely well."

Iraq Army 2nd Lt. Omar Hamid Ajeel, a course graduate, gave credit to his instructors for helping the class succeed.

"All the instructors that were giving the classes are the most experienced officers and instructors I have ever seen in my life," he said. "They were giving us all the information related to the artillery branch, with no limits."

The senior Iraqi Army instructor for the officer's course, Lt. Col. Ali Jasem, said he was happy to see the hard work of the students and staff pay off with the graduation.

"The course started in January and the capability was limited at first, but we provided them with the knowledge and information related to artillery that they needed," said Jasem, who is confident that the artillery branch will play a major role the new Iraqi Army.

According to Martin this graduation comes at just the right time for the Iraqi Army.

"These students are going to go and help the capability of the Iraqi Army," Martin said. "The branch was just established in August of 2009. In January they're going to be receiving seven battalion's worth of U.S. artillery ... so the addition of these officers into

the fold of the field artillery is very significant."

For Martin, the graduation was significant not only because these were the first Iraqi field artillery officers to be trained since March 2003, but because the course was run almost entirely by the Iraqis, with minimal advice and assistance from his team.

"The Iraqis are doing all this on their own," he said. "I'm advising and observing what they're doing and, as an advisor, this is what we want to see ... that the Iraqis are doing this."

Iraqi Staff Gen. About Ganbar, deputy of the Iraqi Army chief of staff for operations, the graduation's keynote speaker, said he was thankful for the field artillery branch and school, and advised the lieutenants to set aside differences and remain loyal to their country.

Following the event, Ganbar offered his thanks to Martin and his team for their help in establishing the new Field Artillery School.

"I feel personally today that we have a fully capable teaching facility and school," he said. "To graduate the officers and fill the assigned staff for the Iraqi artillery branch in Iraq, this first graduation means very much to us."

Both Martin and Ajeel see a bright future ahead for Iraq the Iraqi Army and for field artillery officers' role in it.

For Ajeel it's a matter of patriotism.

"I would like to say, God willing, I will serve my country honorably," he said, "and we will get all the terrorism down with all the capabilities that we have, to build a great Iraq."



New Iraqi Army field artillery officers listen for their names to be called as they wait for the opportunity to learn their new assignments. The officers graduated June 6, from the new Field Artillery School's officer basic course. One hundred twenty Iraqi lieutenants became the first new officers in the Iraqi Army's reconstituted field artillery branch since March 2003.

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doing is still having an effect.”

First Lieutenant Justin Prophet, of Bellingham, Mass., platoon leader of 2nd platoon, 747th MP Co., has led almost 120 missions advising the district police chiefs in Fallujah and Habaniyah. He found that it was vital as a leader to keep his Soldiers up to speed on their missions and what the overarching goals were. He did through in-depth briefs and by including his junior Soldiers in leadership engagements with his Iraqi counterparts.

“They got to see the faces, they got to deal with the people that they were always hearing about in the briefs and the debriefs,” he said, “It gave them a bigger picture of our objectives in advising and assisting the Iraqi Police.”

According to Command Sgt Maj. Arthur L. Coleman Jr., senior enlisted advisor for the USF-I deputy-commanding

Tactically and operationally, small units on the ground have made the difference. They need to understand what they’ve done at their level has gotten us to the strategic place where we are today.

general for operations, as the big picture for USF-I changes from Operation Iraqi Freedom into Operation New Dawn in September, it will continue to be important for American service members to remember that Iraqis will continue to look to them as the example of how professional Soldiers look and behave.

“Every Soldier, Sailor, Airman and Marine is an ambassador for our nation,” Coleman said. “The way we carry ourselves, the way we talk to our Iraqi counterparts, the way the Iraqis see us engage on a daily basis

has a huge impact.”

Prophet thinks one of the best ways to ensure Soldiers maintains high standards is by having first line leaders spot check team members and squad members for “little things” like eye protection, hearing protection, gloves and water.

“The little things create the big things,” Prophet said. “They’re the enablers. They are what allow us to focus on the mission.”

Wilson credits the small unit, first line leaders with enabling the strategic mission by maintaining the professionalism of the United States forces over the last seven years of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“If we didn’t have the standards and discipline and conduct that we have had in the years that we have been in Iraq, we would not be where we are today strategically,” said Wilson.

He said the Iraqi Army is becoming a well-organized and a well-disciplined force, because not only are they learning how the U.S. forces train and fight, but they are also seeing leaders and Soldiers who act like professionals and the value of proper conduct on the battlefield.



Photo by Sgt. Kenneth Binze

Staff Sgt. Thomas H. Garrard, 2nd squad leader, 3rd platoon, 66th Military Police Company, 317th Military Police Battalion, 49th Military Police Brigade, demonstrates an effective control hold on a demonstrator during a Police Transition Team training engagement at a Baquba police station. Small unit leaders like Garrard have been responsible for maintaining the professionalism of U.S. forces in Iraq and setting the example for the Iraqi Security Forces they advise.

Conference promotes communication



Photo by Staff Sgt. Dan Yarnall

(left to right) Major Tim Forsting, United States Forces-Iraq communications plans officer, Sgt. Maj. Charles Brainard, USF-I J-6 sergeant major, and Pvt. Amber Thomas, USF-I help desk specialist, cut a birthday cake at the Signal Corps leader conference, June 6, with a Ka-bar that had been issued to Forsting in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War. The U.S. Army Signal Corps Soldiers celebrated with a fun run and barbecue for the corps' 150 year birthday which officially takes place June 21.

Story by Staff Sgt. Dan Yarnall
United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs

Signaleers from across Iraq filled the ballroom of Al Faw Palace at Camp Victory June 6 for the Signal Corps Leaders Conference and to celebrate the upcoming corps birthday.

The signal Soldiers celebrated the 150th anniversary of the U.S. Army Signal Corps, which will officially occur June 21, with the conference, a 5k fun run and an evening barbecue and social.

The centerpiece of the day was the leadership conference, held to reinforce the signaleers' communication and planning throughout Iraq.

The intent of the conference was to provide an opportunity for open communication among Signal Corps leadership and make sure that everyone is "synchronized" in their work, according to Sgt. Maj. Charles Brainard, USF-I J-6 sergeant major.

"From the highest level, USF-I J-6, down to the brigade combat team, we all need to be on the same sheet of music," he said.

Brainard also wanted to prepare his fellow Signaleers for challenges that the transition to an advise and assist role will bring.

"We wanted to let folks know where we are as far as USF-I, what the plan holds, and what our overarching goals are," said Brainard.

Dr. Ali Hassan Tarish, Ministry of Defense chief information officer and Maj. Gen. Saad Yahya Khadim, Ministry of Interior, communications director, joined the conference to learn how U.S. Forces keep their communication technology running.

Khadim said he was particularly impressed with the sense of cooperation and by the "can do" spirit among the units.

"We wanted to bring our Iraqi partners in from the MoD and MoI to show them how we share information, resolve community challenges and bond as a team," said Brainard.

This conference also provided Signal Corps Soldiers deployed to Iraq the chance to network with

fellow Signaleers and exchange information.

"I met a lot of other signal warrant officers. It was good to see what their challenges were in comparison to my own. To be able to compare notes and come up with solutions was a highlight for me," said Chief Warrant Officer Justin Cecil,

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Photo by Spc. Kelly Morehouse

Signaleers with Task Force Lion finish a 5K fun run June 6, in honor of the U.S. Army Signal Corps' 150th birthday, which occurs June 21.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Dan Yarnall

Rear Adm. David Simpson United States Forces-Iraq J6, speaks to Signal Corps Soldiers from across Iraq at the ballroom of Al Faw Palace, June 5, during the Signal Corps leader conference. The main purpose of the leader conference was to ensure open communication between Soldiers in the Signal Corps.

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network engineer with United States Division-Center.

More than 150 people attended the conference and Col. Steve Birch, deputy commander J-6 for USF-I, said he was pleased

with how it turned out.

“I think this has gone pretty well,” said Birch. “We’re happy to have the participation at this event considering how difficult it can be to travel in this country. It turned out to be a very good exchange of information.”

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VBC Facility Operating Hours

Sports Oasis DFAC
Breakfast 5:00 - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Dinner 5 - 8:30 p.m.
Midnight chow 11:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.
Sandwich Bar open 24 hours

Education Center
8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Camp Liberty Post Exchange
8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Camp Victory Post Exchange
8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Paul Smith Gym
Open 24 Hours

Victory Main Post Office
Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Saturday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**USF-I Unit Mail Room
Customer Services/Mail Call:**
Daily 3 - 6 p.m.

Al Faw Palace Post Office
Wednesday and Sunday
12:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Golby TMC Sick Call
Monday - Friday 7:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Saturday & Sunday 9 - 11:30 a.m.

Mental Health Clinic
Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. - noon

Pharmacy
Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon;
1 - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon

Websites

Check it out:

USF-I Web pages
www.usf-iraq.com
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U.S. Army III Corps
Phantom Battalion
III Corps Fort Hood

Gradcast lets parents watch kids graduate



Sgt. 1st Class Lloyd Smith, supply sergeant with United States Forces-Iraq stationed out of Fort Hood, Texas, and close friends at Camp Victory congratulate Smith's daughter, Brenna, before her graduation from Ellison High School during Gradcast, June 6. Gradcast gives deployed parents the opportunity to watch their children receive their high school diploma live via video telecast.

Story and photo by Spc. Britney Bodner
United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs

A mother sits with her hands folded in front of her in anticipation. In the seat next to her, a father rocks back and forth nervously. Their children are about to graduate high school.

As the graduates cross the stage, the mother cheers for her son. The father's smile covers his face as his daughter receives her diploma. Unlike many parents at the Shoemaker High School Graduation in Texas, these parents, along with five others, are half a world away at Camp Victory, Iraq.

Parents deployed from Fort Hood, Texas, got the chance to watch their children graduate during live telecasts that took place from June 4 to June 7.

Gradcast is a joint venue between the area high schools and Fort Hood that allows deployed Soldiers the opportunity to see their children graduate live via a video telecast, said Capt. Stephanie Royal, organizer for Camp Victory's Gradcast.

Royal said seven high schools in the Killeen area participated in the VTCs so parents could see their children and the students were able to see their parent's reactions on the megatron as they walked across the stage at the Bell County Expo Center in Belton, Texas, where the graduations were held.

A total of 35 parents on Camp Victory participated in this year's Gradcast.

Sergeant 1st Class Lloyd Smith, a supply sergeant with United States Forces-Iraq and based out of Fort Hood, watched

his daughter, Brenna, as she graduated with honors from Ellison High School, June 6, an opportunity he thought he'd lost when deployment orders came.

"When I received word I was deploying it was an emotional event," he said. "One of the first things that came up was that I wasn't going to be able to see her graduation."

Gradcast also turned out to be extremely important for Brenna, Smith said.

"When I found out about the VTC and started corresponding with my daughter we both got excited about it," said Smith.

To celebrate, Smith invited 15 of his closest friends and coworkers for a small party during the VTC with his family. As the only parent on Camp Victory with a child graduating from Ellison, the VTC was held at his office.

For Spc. Thomas Waldrop, a mail clerk for III Corps, Special Troop Battalion also out of Fort Hood, this graduation was a chance for him to see his son rewarded for the extra work he had put in during his final year.

His son had to switch high schools and would not have had enough electives to graduate, but worked hard enough to complete them.

Waldrop said it was exciting to see everything his son had accomplished come to this point.

"You're so many miles away," said Waldrop. "It's great to have the VTC to share these moments with their children."

Waldrop's son, Timothy Bowler, graduated June 5, from Killeen High School.

Deployed parents also got the chance to speak with their children during individual family conferences.

"That's my favorite part," said Royal. "You get to see the family come into the room and sit on the sofa and watch mom or dad say to their child, 'I'm proud of you.' It can get very emotional."

Smith said the one-on-one live feed was extremely special since many friends joined him for the small party to give their congratulations to his daughter.

"I think it's neat with this program because it's possible for parents to see their kids and at least have a little bit of time to see one of the beginning milestones of each child's life," said Sgt. 1st Class Stanley Tolbert, a J4 logistic technician and close friends to the Smith family.

"You don't get that time back," Smith said, "In the past, I missed her first words, first steps, all that good stuff. When I got back from a deployment, she had already done most of her firsts.

"Opportunities like this bring you back to the family network and all the events that the family will talk about, and you can share those memories."