

# USF-I CHRONICLE

Volume 1, Issue 7

July 2010



USF-I Celebrates  
Army's 235th  
Birthday



Sgt. 1st Class James Williams from Headquarters Support Company, III Corps Special Troops Battalion, renders a salute after posting the colors during the U.S. Army's 235th birthday celebration at Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory, Iraq, June 14. More than 200 service members gathered to view videos highlighting Soldiers in Iraq and a streamer ceremony during the event. (U.S. Army photo by Lee Cracker)



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# USF-I CHRONICLE

The Official Magazine of  
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July 2010  
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# U.S. aids Iraqi transition from AK-47 to M-16 rifles

Story and photos by  
Spc. Roland Hale  
USD-C Public Affairs



**First Sgt. Devin Horsley**, with the Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, talks an Iraqi Army Soldier through the process of “zeroing” his M-16 rifle. Soldiers from the CAB, 1st Inf. Div., held weapons training for Iraqi Army soldiers on Camp Taji, June 15, as part of the Iraqi Army’s transition from the AK-47 assault rifle to the M-16.



An Iraqi Army Soldier examines his M-16 rifle during weapons training with U.S. Soldiers on Camp Taji, June 15. The Iraqi Army is currently replacing their arsenal of older AK-47s with the M-16.



An Iraqi Army Soldier adjusts the front sight post of his M-16 rifle during weapons training with U.S. Soldiers on Camp Taji, June 15.

U.S. Soldiers serving on Camp Taji, trained Iraqi troops on the fundamentals of marksmanship with the Colt M-16 rifle, June 15. The training was part of a continued effort by the U.S. to phase out the Iraqi Army's use of the Soviet-era AK-47 Kalashnikov assault rifle.

The swap between the two weapons has gun-enthusiasts across the military and social-media sites taking notice, as fans of both weapons debate the practicality of the initiative.

The AK-47, which has become symbolic of Middle Eastern militaries, has been used by the Iraqi Army since the 1960s. The weapon is less accurate than the western M-16 rifle, yet it's more durable design makes it a more suitable match for a desert climate, critics say.

But the transition to the M-16 is not based solely on the weapons

capability. In a measure intended to reduce the number of American weapons being acquired by insurgents, rifles will be registered individually as the rifles are issued to Iraqi Soldiers.

The new M-16s will also update the Iraqi Army's arsenal, as many of their AK-47s are in varying states of disrepair, according to military officials.

On Camp Taji, it was all smiles from the Iraqi troops, as the U.S. Soldiers walked them through the basics of firing the M-16.

"For their first time, they shot very well – even compared to some U.S. Soldiers," said Sgt. Kevin Averre, noncommissioned officer in charge of the training. Averre is assigned to the Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, and serving as a battle NCO in the brigade's tactical operations center.

Averre has prior experience with

Iraqi Security Forces. In 2003, he served with them as an infantryman assigned to the 4th Infantry Division.

"Even in 2003 they spoke very highly of the M-16's accuracy," said Averre.

The training focused primarily on "zeroing" the weapons, a process by which firers adjust the weapon's sights to align with their eyesight. The Iraqi Soldiers also received instruction on weapons maintenance, something that was seldom necessary with the durable AK-47.

While the Iraqi Army has already received thousands of weapons in accordance with the proposed one-for-one swap of AK-47 for M-16, receipt of the weapons is prioritized by necessity. Many Iraqi Soldiers on Camp Taji do not use M-16s, and as the weapons continue to arrive, U.S. units like the CAB, 1st Inf. Div. will remain actively engaged in the training of the Iraqi Army.



Sgt. Kevin Averre, with the Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, demonstrates a firing position to Iraqi Army Soldiers. Averre and several other Soldiers from the CAB, 1st Inf. Div. conducted weapons training with Iraqi troops on Camp Taji, June 15, assisting the Iraqi Army's transition from the AK-47 to the M-16.

**JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq** – Soldiers with 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) will accept a new mission during their deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The “Bayou Bandits,” headquartered in Lake Charles, La., were originally tasked with providing security to convoys transporting equipment and supplies to assist in the upcoming responsible drawdown of U.S. troops and equipment from Iraq.

In their new mission with the 3rd Sustainment Brigade out of Fort Stewart, Ga., the battalion will continue to provide convoy security teams and will also provide quick reaction forces and security for contracted vehicle recovery teams. In addition, Company B has been tasked with providing support for special operations units located throughout Iraq.

“Our mission hasn’t really changed,” said Master Sgt. Orise Cormier, operations sergeant with 3rd Bn., 156th Inf. Regt. and a Jennings, La., native. “It’s grown. The main change is that we are going to be running a lot more missions to more places than we were while at Al Asad.”

The new mission requires the battalion to take charge of what was formerly a brigade-size mission.

“This will be a challenging new task for us,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Stephen Hickman, command sergeant major of 3rd Bn., 156th Inf. Regt., and a DeQuincy, La., native. “But our Soldiers have trained hard and are more than capable of accomplishing the mission that has been given to us.”

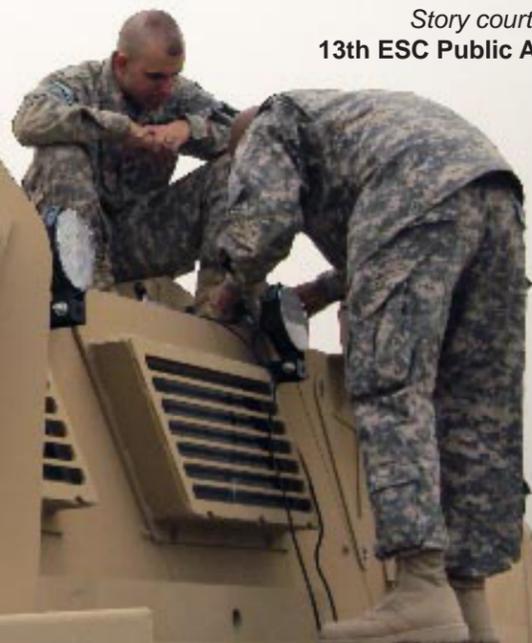
To help support its new missions, the Bandits have been assigned an additional company from the 256th.

Company G, 199th Brigade Support Battalion, permanently attached to 1st Bn., 141st Field Artillery Regiment, will relocate to provide additional convoy security forces. The companies of 3rd Bn., 156th Inf. Regt., will be conducting their new missions from different bases across Iraq.

“Having units work out of multiple locations is not a new experience for us,” said Lt. Col. David Gooch, commander of 3rd Bn., 156th Inf. Regt., and a Katy, Texas, native. “Our battalion is made up of units located at nine different cities across western Louisiana and we have quite a bit of experience operating out of separate communities in support of state missions.”

## “Bayou Bandits” accept new mission in Iraq

*Story courtesy of  
13th ESC Public Affairs*



**Soldiers with Company A**, 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), mount lights on a Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle at Al Asad Air Base. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt Nathaniel P. Orphey)



# Renovated barracks improve Iraqi Army quality of life

*Story and photo by Marcus Spade  
GRD Public Affairs*

**Maj. Gen. Claudio Angelelli**, deputy commander of NATO Training Mission – Iraq, and **Gen. Jasim Salem Hussein**, deputy chief of staff for Training, Iraqi Army, cut the ribbon officially opening the newly renovated Joint Staff and Command College barracks in Ar Rustimayah, Jun.13. (GRD photo by Marcus Spade)

**N**ATO officials, media and coalition representatives toured three newly renovated barracks buildings Jun. 13, following a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Iraqi Joint Staff and Command College. This renovation project is an integral part of improving the quality of life for personnel attending the Joint Staff and command College located in Ar Rustimayah.

The three barracks buildings and two associated ablution blocks (modular hygiene facilities) have nearly tripled on-campus housing for cadets.

“I am extremely proud of our Baghdad area and resident offices, especially when our project engineers, the Iraqi local national engineers, and quality assurance representative combine their knowledge and experience to train, coach and mentor the Iraqi

contractors on acceptable design, construction, and job site security practices to deliver quality facilities on time for the Iraqis to utilize,” said Lt. Col. Israel Figueroa, officer in charge of the Baghdad area office. “Their professionalism and dedication were instrumental to the successful completion of this project, which increases the capacity of the Iraqi Joint Staff and Command College to provide lodging facilities for their students from sixty to one hundred sixty.”

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was attended by Maj. Gen. Claudio Angelelli, deputy commander of NATO Training Mission - Iraq, Lt. Gen. Jasim Salem Hussein, Iraqi Army deputy chief of staff for training, and Brig. Gen. Mohammed Jawhar, commander of the Joint Staff Command College. Lt. Col. Figueroa attended on behalf of the Gulf Region District.

The GRD project delivery team from the Loyalty Resident Office consisted of Lt. William Lucke, officer in charge, Sara Delmonico, Deryck Solomon, Anwar Mudher, and Sarmed Jaleel. The total contract value was \$946,600 with an original period of performance of 180 days. The contractor for the project was Al-Laith Al-Sumeri Group who finished the project in 179 days, one day early.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq has completed thousands of reconstruction projects in partnership with the U.S. Government and the Government of Iraq. Since 2004, USACE has completed more than 4,800 projects throughout Iraq valued at more than \$7.7 billion, and has more than 250 projects ongoing. The overall reconstruction effort in Iraq currently provides jobs for more than 20,000 Iraqis.

# Peshmerga forces begin infantry training with U.S. Soldiers

Story and photos by  
Pfc. Jessica Luhrs  
USD-N Public Affairs



**Staff Sgt. Pedro Lopez**, an El Paso, Texas, native and a squad leader with Bravo Battery, shows Peshmerga forces various hand signals during training, at a headquarters in Laylan, near Kirkuk, June 14.

**P**eshmerga forces have been fighting side-by-side with U.S. forces since 2003, and select members of the 1st Kurdish Regional Guard Brigade started basic infantry training, run by U.S. troops at a headquarters in Laylan, near Kirkuk, Iraq, June 14.

The training is being facilitated by their brothers-in-arms: Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 'Gunners' 3rd Field Artillery, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas.

More than 50 KRGB noncommissioned officers and officers are participating in the training and are set to graduate mid-August, according to Cpl. Anthony Millsap, a Bravo Battery Soldier who is responsible for training the Peshmerga.

During training they will learn infantry skills, proper care and use of their weapon and other battlefield techniques.

"They are already picking up on the training very quickly," Millsap added.

The first sergeant of Bravo Battery explained that the Peshmerga are picking things up quickly because this group was



**Cpl. Anthony Millsap**, a team leader with Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, uses rocks to simulate various movement techniques for Peshmerga forces at a headquarters in Laylan, near Kirkuk, June 14.

handpicked by their leadership.

"Our concept for this training is to train the trainer," said 1st Sgt. Bobby Bennett, with Bravo Battery and the senior enlisted trainer. "In order for this concept to work, we brought out a select group of Pesh."

Picking the right individuals to receive the training was key, because they will go back to their units to train their own forces.

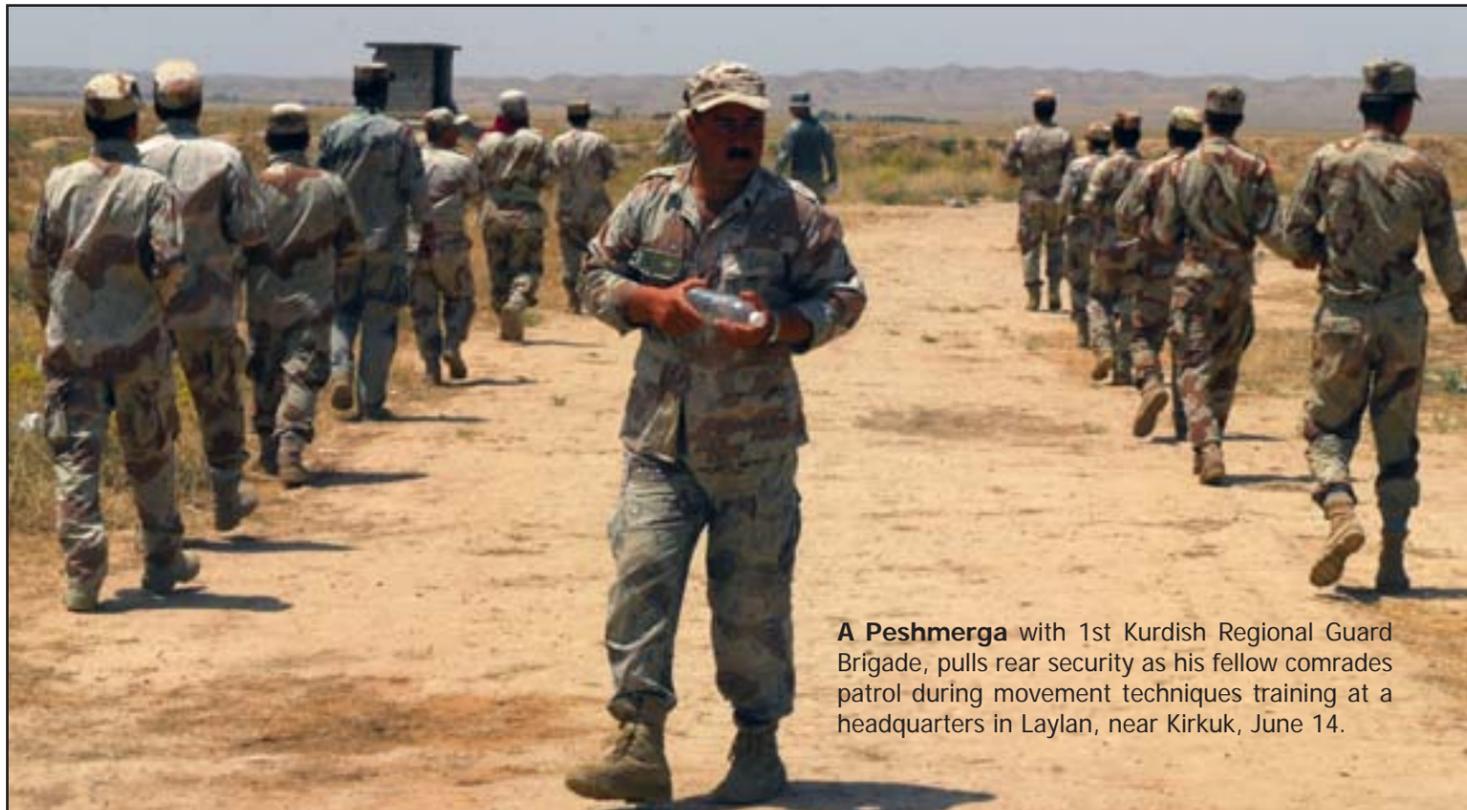
Leadership of the KRGB said they are very appreciative of the training.

Sergeant Maj. Harked Alimase Halmasala said he is thankful because he has lost many men on the battlefield due to their lack of training.

"We fight as we train; now we are training well, so we'll fight well," he said.

Millsap said he believes this training will do more than give the Peshmerga skills needed for the battlefield.

"This training gives the Pesh a sense of courage and confidence; it also prepares them to take over the security in the area," he said.



**A Peshmerga** with 1st Kurdish Regional Guard Brigade, pulls rear security as his fellow comrades patrol during movement techniques training at a headquarters in Laylan, near Kirkuk, June 14.



**Staff Sgt. Pedro Lopez** shows a Peshmerga the direction to face his 'weapon,' during training, at a headquarters in Laylan, near Kirkuk, June 14.

# Watching your child graduate while thousands of miles away.....



.....PRICELESS!

Story by Master Sgt. Timothy Volkert  
Photos by Spc. Britney Bodner  
USF-I Public Affairs

**Sgt. 1st Class Esther Elliott**, an intelligence planner with III Corps out of Fort Hood, Texas, talks with her family via video teleconference from Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory, June 5. Elliott had the opportunity to speak with her daughter, Elizabeth White, and family back home. She also watched her daughter's graduation ceremony from Shoemaker High School live.

Physically, she was about 7,300 miles away. Emotionally, she was in the front row.

As her daughter's name was about to be called, Sgt. 1st Class Esther Elliott nervously watched for her on the two 78-inch monitors in the Tigris Conference Room at Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory, Iraq. Wringing her hands, she slowly inched forward with each passing moment.

When the name Elizabeth White was announced and she moved across the stage to receive her high school diploma, a smile exploded onto Elliott's face, her eyes filled with tears of joy as she clapped and waved at the screen.

"I wanted to jump out of my seat," said Elliott. "In my mind I was saying 'hurry up and walk across the stage so I can see you.' It was a great, great moment. I was sitting on the edge of

my seat. I just kind of scooted up to the edge just waiting for her to come out. I almost fell off. I knew it would be exciting and I'd be happy to see her, but I didn't think I would have all those emotions run through me at once."

Deployed for a one-year tour with the III Corps Special Troops Battalion, Elliott knew she was not going to be able to attend the graduation in person, but was comforted by the fact that she wasn't going to miss it either.

"It's really special. For that one split second you actually forget where you are," she said. "For me, it was like I was there. I was so into it that I tuned everyone out. It felt like I was there."

Thanks to Gradcast, a joint venture between the Killen Independent School District and Fort Hood, Texas, Soldiers and DA civilians who are

deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan or for training away from the area, are able to watch graduation ceremonies live via video teleconference.

When the student's name is called and he or she walks the stage, the deployed parent is broadcast live back to the ceremony both on a large screen for friends and family to see, as well as a monitor on stage so the graduate can also see their parent.

Elliott said the fact that the school district and Fort Hood community cares enough to make the extra effort for deployed Soldiers means a lot.

"It's a huge, huge deal to me. It's really important to think that someone actually cared enough to do something like this for us. It means more to us than anything."

For military families, the graduation ceremony tends to be a little more emotional because the journey



**"I knew it would be exciting and I'd be happy to see her, but I didn't think I would have all those emotions run through me at once."**

**Sgt. 1st Class Esther Elliott  
Deployed Mom**

their children take to reach that stage is often far different than that of their peers.

Elliott said her daughter has been to several different schools and has moved about eight times during her life. Each move brings with it transition; adjusting to new friends, a new educational system, a new life. How-

ever, like other military children, she believes it also made her daughter more well-rounded.

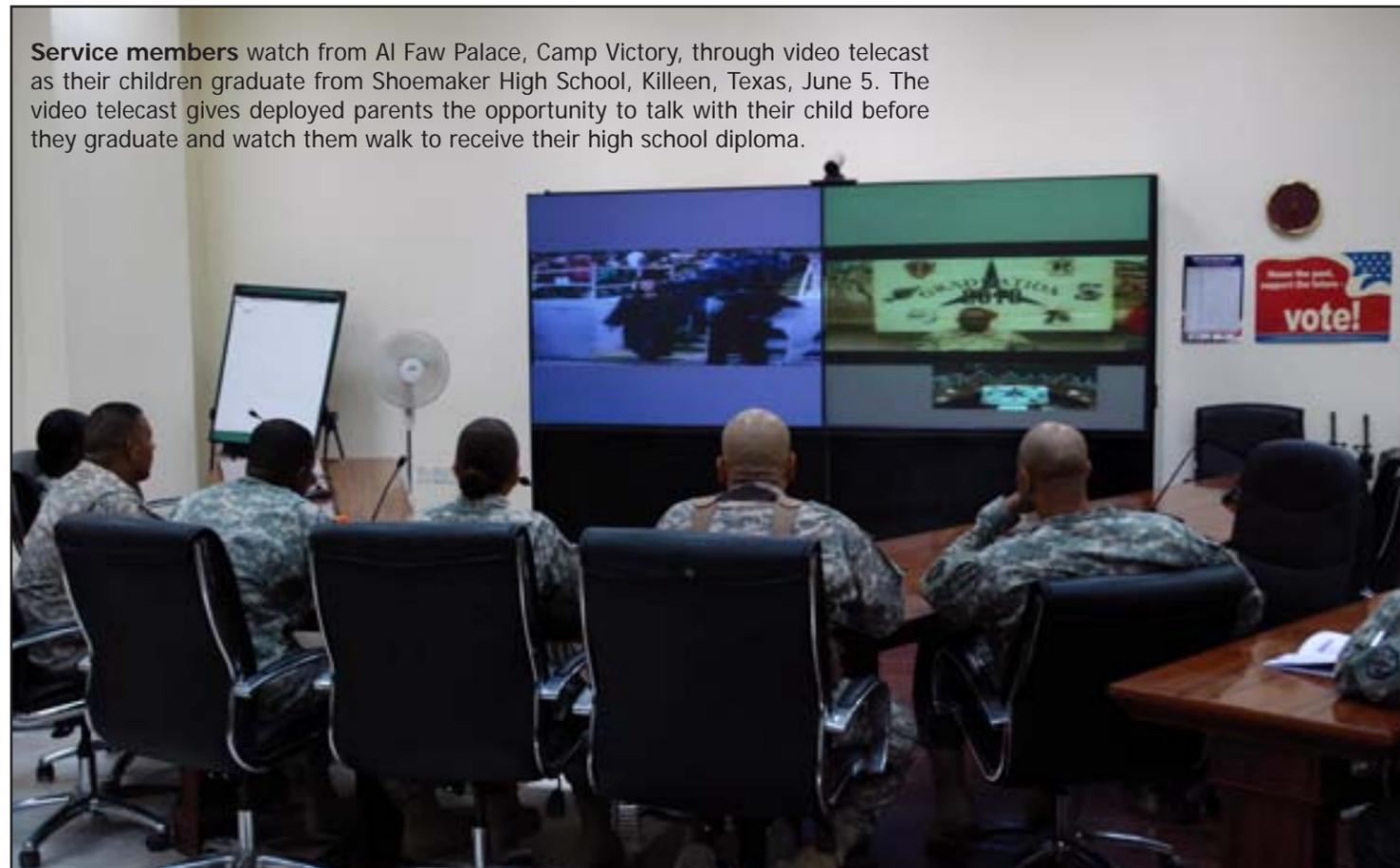
"I think it made her a stronger person," Elliott said. "It made her more outgoing. It made her more independent than she would have been if we would have stayed in the same place."

Now, as her daughter prepares to head off to Prairie View College in Houston, Texas, her mom says she's proud, but also struggles with the fact that her child is now a young adult ready to move out into the world.

"I'm starting to learn and keep telling myself that I have to let her go, that she'll be fine," Elliott said. "That is the hardest thing, to watch them grow from something really little to the mature adults that they are. Then they go to college and you just pray that they remember all the stuff that you taught them."

With the ceremony complete, Elliott left the conference room with a new memory of her daughter, the high school graduate. She may have been thousands of miles away, but she was a part of it, and those few seconds when she saw her daughter walk the stage are priceless.

"That couple of seconds meant so much to me," Elliott said. "It's going to be a couple of seconds that I'm going to remember for a long time."



**Service members** watch from Al Faw Palace, Camp Victory, through video telecast as their children graduate from Shoemaker High School, Killeen, Texas, June 5. The video telecast gives deployed parents the opportunity to talk with their child before they graduate and watch them walk to receive their high school diploma.

# Operation Proper Exit: helping wounded warriors find closure



Retired Staff Sgt. **Chris Bain** (center) touches the ground near Gunner Gate on Camp Taji, Iraq, where he was ambushed, April 8, 2004. Bain and eleven other wounded warriors visited Camp Taji, June 13, as part of Operation Proper Exit VII. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Roland Hale)



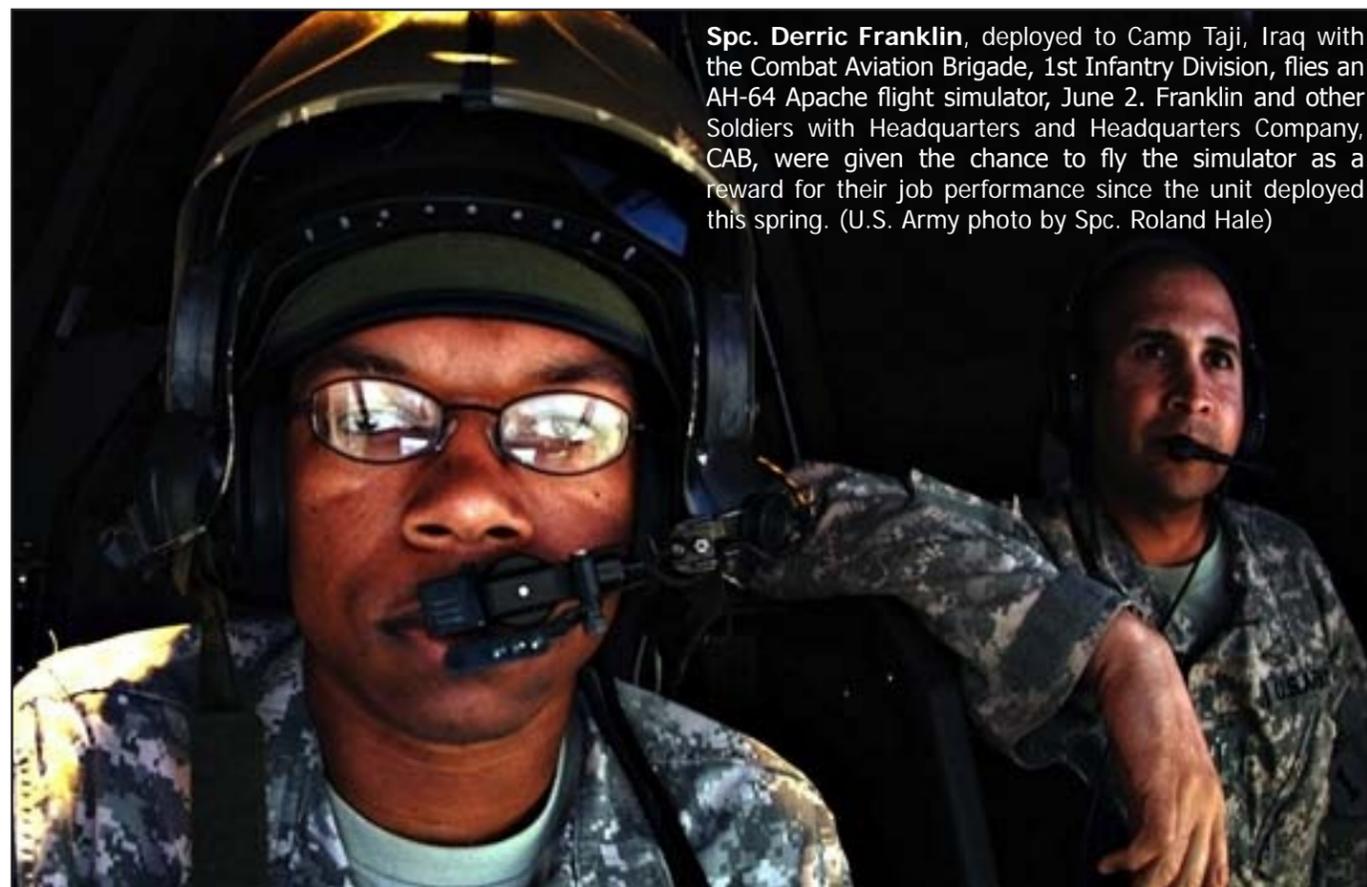
Above: **Spc. Aubrey Stoda**, a medic with 307th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, examines the throat of a patient during a one-day, combined U.S. – Iraqi medical clinic June 6, in Kubaysah, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Katie Summerhill)



**Col. Roger Cloutier**, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division commander, shakes hands with an Iraqi Soldier after presenting him an award for participating in a joint defensive fire exercise with 1st AAB Soldiers on Besmaya Range Complex, June 19. The Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers prepared for four days prior to the event, which simulated a complete ground and air defensive attack involving the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, and Iraqi Army. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Emily V. Knitter)



**Cpl. Hassan**, a medic with the 7th Iraqi Army Division, applies a tourniquet to a patient with a simulated amputation during a mass-casualty training exercise orchestrated by medics of 307th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, June 3, at Camp Mejid, Iraq. As the triage noncommissioned officer in charge, Hassan must evaluate which of the 25 simulated injuries get treated and evacuated first. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



**Spc. Derric Franklin**, deployed to Camp Taji, Iraq with the Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, flies an AH-64 Apache flight simulator, June 2. Franklin and other Soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, CAB, were given the chance to fly the simulator as a reward for their job performance since the unit deployed this spring. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Roland Hale)

**Chad Kagy**, a two-time gold medal X-Games winner, does a back-flip on his bicycle over the head of a Navy commander during the second Bikes Over Baghdad Tour at Camp Liberty, June 17. Kagy has won 11 medals in the X-Games. He said despite going upside-down on a bike, he thinks Soldiers are braver than any stuntman and he looks forward to going back home and telling people about the good things going on in Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Daniel Schneider)



Below: **Spc. Ricardo Mireles**, and other Soldiers pose for a photo with some local children in front of a school construction site in the Bani Samala area, June 14. Mireles is a psychological operations specialist with the 341st Tactical Psychological Operations Company, 17th Psychological Operations Group and native of San Antonio, Texas. The school will serve about 400 children, almost 300 more than the current school. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Khori D. Johnson)



**Iraqi policemen** practice carrying a casualty during a medical class at Contingency Operating Site Kalsu, Iraq, June 14. Ten Iraqi policemen spent four days learning first aid techniques from the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division's combat medics. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Deshon Bell)

**Pfc. Matthew Allen**, an infantryman with Company C, 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, takes a photo with a local young resident of Hasa, Iraq, while his company commander visits a medical engagement the Iraqi Army is conducting for the village, June 12 and 13. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



# Professionalism, proper conduct key to mission success

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Roger M. Dey  
USF-I Public Affairs



Multi-National Forces - Iraq, **Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence K. Wilson** (center) discusses the convoy route with members of Company D, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry, Task Force 134, New Jersey Army National Guard, during a weapons checkpoint. Wilson frequently uses convoys as his method of travel between camps in Iraq. (U.S. Marine photo by Sgt. Denise Serrano)

**T**hanks 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 of 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 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



**Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur L. Coleman, Jr.**, USF-I deputy commanding general for operations' senior enlisted advisor and III Corps command sergeant major, discusses the future of the Counter Insurgency Stability Operations Center with **Col. Robert Shaw**, commandant of the center. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Roger M. Dey)

Below: "Train me, Sergeant," says **Spc. Paul Williams**, a joint node network operator with 3rd Signal, Division Special Troops Battalion. Junior enlisted Soldiers asked to be trained and cared for by their non-commissioned officers during an NCO Induction Ceremony on Contingency Operating Base Speicher. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Chad D. Nelson)



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 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 way to ensure Soldiers

maintains high standards is by having first line leaders spot checking 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 Iraq 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.

# Iraqi Army, Air Force Conduct Joint Medical Training

Story and photos by  
2nd Lt. Joseph Dennis  
USD-C Public Affairs

**CAMP TAJI, Iraq** – As the dust settled on the landing zone, two MI-17 helicopters lifted off from the 36th Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division headquarters at Camp Taji, their departure signifying the completion of the unit's first joint medical training exercise between the Iraqi Army and Air Force.

Although the two Iraqi services have conducted a combined training exercise in the form of an air assault mission with support from 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, and the 36th Bde. 9th IA Div. Military Transition Team, this medical training was the first time the Iraqis planned, resourced and conducted the entire mission without the support of U.S. forces.

The training event began when red smoke grenades, symbolizing improvised explosive devices, detonated near an army convoy. The Soldiers immediately sprang into action, pulling their "wounded" comrades from the vehicle and setting up security around the site.

While U.S. and Iraqi Army observers snapped pictures and took notes, first aid-trained Iraqi Soldiers treated the casualties as their commander called over the radio for an air evacuation.

Soon, helicopters buzzed overhead and the wounded were loaded into the back of an ambulance and transported to the landing zone.

Since last fall, the transition team has partnered with 2nd Sqdn., 1st Cav. Regt., and worked tirelessly to provide medical training to their Iraqi counterparts.

Capt. Patrick Hanson, an intelligence officer with the team, explained that the final exercise came after months of training.

"The first aid training for the Iraqi Soldiers began in October, with (Staff Sgt.) Osorio training eight to 10 Soldiers every other week," said Hanson, adding that as the Iraqi Soldiers' skills improved, army leaders began teaching the class and enforcing the standards themselves.

When the Iraqis began mastering these medical skills, their lead medic, 1st Lt. Naseem, developed the plan for the exercise.

In three weeks, he created a completely Iraqi-led medical course in coordination with the Iraqi air force to provide his medics practice loading casualties into helicopters, and secured all the equipment necessary for the actual event.

"(Naseem) has been the driving force behind this," Hanson said.

As the rotor blades kicked up dust, Iraqi medics loaded the last of the casualties into the helicopters.

Standing beside them, Naseem, Hanson and other MiTT members observed and recorded their performance.

"We have some work to do," said Naseem. "I will take what I wrote down and make it better next time."

Although Naseem and the 2nd Sqdn., 1st Cav. Regt. MiTT members see room for improvement, they are glad to see signs that the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces continue to grow.



**Iraqi Army soldiers** carry a simulated casualty during a joint IA and Iraqi Air Force medical training exercise at Camp Taji.



**Iraqi Army Soldiers** treat and stabilize a simulated casualty during a joint IA and Iraqi Air Force medical training exercise at Camp Taji.

**Iraqi Air Force MI-17 helicopters** stir up dust as they land while Iraqi Army Soldiers prepare to carry simulated casualties to the aircraft during a joint exercise between the two services at Camp Taji.

# USF-I Celebrates Army's 235th Birthday

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Roger Dey  
USF-I Public Affairs

Preparing to cut the Army birthday cake with a cavalry saber are: Lt. Gen. Bob Cone, United States Forces–Iraq deputy commanding general for operations and III Corps Commander, Col. William D. Willett, a native of Fancy Farm, Ky., Spc. Jessica Randon, from Phoenix, Ariz., and Command Sgt. Major Arthur L. Coleman, Jr., Cone's senior enlisted advisor. (U.S. Army photo by Lee Craker)

**M**ilitary and civilian members of United States Forces – Iraq gathered here in the rotunda of Al Faw Palace to celebrate 235 years of U.S. Army history with a battle streamer ceremony and cake cutting, June 14.

Lt. Gen. Robert Cone, USF – I deputy commanding general for operations and III Corps commander, presided over the event and spoke on the accomplishments of American Soldiers since 1775.

“Again and again we have seen that even under the most trying circumstances, Army Soldiers have risen to the occasion,” he said. “We should be extremely proud of the contributions we have made, particularly in the last 100 years, in bringing security and prosperity to millions.”

Service members, dignitaries and guests rose as the sound of a drum-roll filled the palace. The III Corps color guard emerged from between a pair of immense pillars and posted the flags of the United States, the U.S. Army and USF-I beneath the enormous American flag that covers three stories of the rotunda. The white Army flag, emblazoned with the motto “This We’ll Defend,” took the spotlight for the battle streamer ceremony, commemorating the campaigns in which the Army has been involved since 1775.

The history of the Army’s actions was read, from Bunker Hill to Iraqi Freedom, with the Army’s flag slowly lowered at the end of each reading. Each time, the campaign

streamers for that conflict were fastened to the top of the flagstaff, until the banner was nearly hidden by the mass of 183 brightly colored ribbons.

Following the battle streamer ceremony, Cone paid credit to the Soldiers who make up the Army team.

“Today’s Army is as strong and professional as it has ever been. Its strength comes from its greatest asset: America’s sons and daughters,” he said. “As it has been for the last 235 years, it is our Soldiers, both active and reserve, who are the heart of our Army.”

The celebration culminated with the arrival of the Army birthday cake, escorted by the youngest Soldier in USF-I, 19-year-old Spc. Jessica Randon, from Phoenix, Ariz., and the oldest Soldier, 64-year-old Col. William D. Willett, a native of Fancy Farm, Ky. They joined Cone and his senior enlisted advisor, Command Sgt. Major Arthur L. Coleman, Jr., in cutting the cake with a cavalry saber.

Willet, who retired from the Army in 2005 after 26 years of active duty service and returned in 2009 to help fill the need for catholic priests in the Army, hoped the event made Soldiers proud to be part of the Army.

“I hope hearing the history makes them proud to be part of the organization,” he said. “When I started out, I was a young infantry Soldier and went to Vietnam in ‘67. Things were a whole lot different than they are now. I hope this reminds all the people here of all that the Army has accomplished through the years.”

# IN MEMORIAM

NAMES OF SERVICE MEMBERS WHO DIED BETWEEN JUNE 1 AND  
JUNE 30, 2010 WHILE SERVING IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

**GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS: THAT A MAN LAY  
DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.**

*JOHN 15:13*

**June 2**

***Pfc. Francisco J. Guardado-Ramirez, 21***

**June 4**

***Sgt. Steve M. Theobald, 53***

**June 11**

***Spc. William C. Yauch, 23***

***Sgt. Israel P. Obryan, 24***

**June 15**

***Spc. Christopher W. Opat, 29***

**June 17**

***Capt. Michael P. Cassidy, 41***

**June 21**

***Spc. Jacob P. Dohrenwend, 20***

**June 26**

***Pfc. Bryant J. Haynes, 21***



**Iraqi Security Forces, their U.S. Army instructor and an interpreter run to find cover during a squad live-fire exercise in Kirkush Military Training Base, Diyala province, Iraq, June 10. They trained to clear mined and wired obstacles, clear bunker complexes and react to contact. (U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Ted Green)**