



U.S. service members deliver care packages to ISF families

Story by Tech. Sgt. Mike Edwards
447th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

Service members from throughout Victory Base Complex recently volunteered for the Good Neighbor Program, which provides needed supplies and toys to Iraqi families.

More than 45 Airmen and Soldiers took part in the two-day good-will mission. During the first day they gathered on Sather Air Base to organize and bundle up the care packages donated by various organizations back in the United States.

The second day, the group loaded up the supplies and toys and headed over to a nearby Iraqi Army compound where they delivered the items to the families of local Iraqi troops.

"This is a way for us to help provide them with some care packages and spend time building relationships with the families," said Tech. Sgt. Misty Moreno with the 447th Air Expeditionary Group, and coordinator for the Good Neighbor Program.

The care packages contained toiletries and other household supplies that can sometimes be difficult to purchase locally, and of course, games and toys for the children.

According to Delaware Air National Guardsman Staff Sgt. Josh Line, who is currently assigned to the 447th Civil Engineering Squadron, the primary focus for the program is to be good neighbors and spend time with the families.

Line, who is on his second tour to Iraq, said that being able to participate

in an event like this couldn't have happened during his last deployment.

"On my first tour to Iraq, our team really didn't have an opportunity to interact with the local populace," he said. "This time around, it is totally different. We get the chance to meet the people who work and live in this country. It is fantastic being able to immerse yourself in their culture. It really helps us focus on why we are here."

While handing out the items to the families, the service

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Photo by Staff Sgt. Josh Line

1st Lt. Jael Hansen, United States Forces-Iraq Joint Operation Center watch officer, looks at a picture she took with two Iraqi girls during the Good Neighbor Program on Victory Base Complex, July 29. The Good Neighbor Program took place over two days in which service members bundled care packages and took them to families of Iraqi troops.

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Chaplain's Corner

Patience and focus found in surrender

By Chaplain (Cmdr.) James Denley
Joint Operations Chaplain

A friend commented at lunch recently, "I'm done praying for patience. Every time I do, I get more trials and troubles."

He was joking, but it's a common feeling to want to be more patient, but cringe when the axe of our life is placed against the hardness of the whetting stone.

When we need more patience, maybe we should reconsider the best way to get it. Instead of focusing on "developing patience" perhaps there is benefit in moving in a different direction. We could try something uncommon to military culture — yield and surrender; to God, not our enemies, of course.

To take the fight to the enemy and overcome all obstacles through skill and determination are how we think. It's ingrained in us. This attitude pays dividends off the battlefield as well.

There are few people on earth that fight the number of personal battles that military personnel and their families do; from frequent moves to long separations and much more.

Statistics show that even with these great challenges service members and their loved ones remain stronger than

the general population. We overcome obstacles by applying ourselves, seeking wise counsel and never ever surrendering.

Our relationship with God, is different particularly when we want to grow in our ability to be patient with ourselves, our circumstances, and others. There's a place for surrendering to his will, his providence, and his protection, which produces patience like the spring rains produce lush green fields.

It's in stepping away from the issue, and letting God take over, that our best virtues sprout and grow: patience, faith, hope, and love among them.

The Apostle Paul in the earliest days of the Christian faith shared how he learned this lesson.

He had troubles he could not overcome through any means he knew.

In the end he was able to accept God's words to him and wrote in I Corinthians 12:9, "My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Whatever the trials you face today, however hard it might be to remain patient and focused, by surrendering to God, he can renew your strength. In the very weaknesses that challenge our lives and those around us, we can find him caring for us ... in fact, perfecting his work in us.

SARC Smarts



Common myths regarding sexual assault:

MYTH #3: Only the young and attractive are assaulted.

FACT: Everyone, regardless of age or physical attractiveness, is a potential victim of assault.

MYTH #4: Sexual assault happens only to people who are "asking for it" by being provocative.

FACT: Nobody asks to be sexually assaulted, even those who dress/act provocatively—some victims may appear vulnerable or be intoxicated, too young, or lack mental, physical, emotional ability to resist/fight back.

Call the USF-I Deployed Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (DSARC) at 485-5085 or 435-2235 for help.

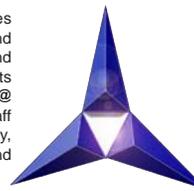
Army members should seek assistance with their Unit Victim Advocate (UVA) or DSARC.



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'Blimp' protects service members from above



The aerostat blimp, part of the Persistent Threat Defense System, floats high above Camp Victory, Aug. 2. The blimp is armed with high-tech camera equipment used to monitor operations and protect service members on Victory Base Complex and the surrounding area.

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

Whether on Victory Base Complex or on a joint mission with Iraqi Soldiers in Baghdad, service members can look up and see the aerostat blimp hovering overhead. However, many of them don't know that that crazy-looking balloon is actually greatly enhancing the safety of troops

The aerostat is equipped with a high-tech surveillance system and is part of the Persistent Threat Detection System, allowing U.S. forces to have an aerial view of operations.

Lyford "Lin" Marr, a native of Fort Worth, Texas, is the PTDS manager on Camp Victory. He's in charge of the Loyalty, Justice, and Lost Lake PTDSs. It is commonly referred to as the aerostat blimp.

The aerostat or PTDS allows U.S. forces the ability to have eyes on an area to provide a quick response to dangerous situations and also allows the opportunity to prevent troops from entering into hazardous situations, Marr said.

"Our team will look down on a mounted or dismounted patrol and provide an added situational awareness that they can't get other places," he said. "We have a 360 degree view of where troops are."

1st Lt. Michael Johnson, information collection manager, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, said that

PTDS is crucial to keeping his Soldiers safe while conducting missions. He provides the link between units on the ground and Marr's PTDS team.

"The PTDS informs us of possible threats, such as an ambush or possible IED, so we can react to them prior to them becoming a problem," he said.

It takes a team to run and maintain the PTDS. Marr said that 12 people are assigned to each aerostat site, working six people per shift.

Each member of the team may have a specific job, but they are often required to perform a task outside of their specialty while on duty.

"Everyone does everything. A subject matter expert might specialize in hydraulics but he may have to perform camera work," he said.

Marr and his team agree that the job is demanding overall as the crew often works as much as 16 to 20 hours a day, but they agree it's definitely worth it.

Mark Haughton, a PTDS engineer from Houston, Texas, said, "What we do protects service members and gives them a better way to defend themselves.

"It's rewarding doing something great for the troops, and it feels good knowing that we're part of a team with them."

Johnson said that every time they have a unit go out, they request assistance from the PTDS because they know the eye in the sky can help keep the Soldier safe.

"I cannot say how important Marr and the members of the PTDS team are to our safety and operations," said Johnson.



Dave Chirdon, a senior field engineer for the Persistent Threat Defense System and from Milford, Del., operates aerostat blimp from the control room at Camp Victory.

Last Air Force PTT ends deployment, passes mission to Army MPs

Story by Staff Sgt. Sanjay Allen
Air Component Coordination Element-Iraq Public Affairs

The last Air Force Police Transition Team completed its deployment and passed the mission on to an Army Military Police Company during a Transfer of Authority Ceremony July 26 at Camp Stryker.

The 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, Detachment 2, cased their colors and handed over the advise-and-assist mission to the Army's 94th Military Police Company based out of Maine.

"We're officially the final Air Force Police Transition Team in Iraq," said Maj. David Lederer, Det. 2 commander, deployed from Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va. "Reapers, we are finally off mission."

The team of 160 defenders from 56 bases began their training at Camp Shelby, Miss., in October 2009 and assumed their mission Jan. 10.

The Airmen were tasked with training Iraqi police in general police tactics and techniques and they assisted the local Iraqi Police with community policing, cordon and search, weapons cache searches, weapons training, and humanitarian missions.

The team also conducted missions supporting the investigative task force and exploitation task force, assisting Iraqi Police with investigations of improvised explosive devices, vehicle-borne IEDs, and other violence and crimes in the greater Baghdad area.

"You can measure your success in the proficiency of the men and women you train and by a heightened public confidence in Iraqi police across Baghdad," said Lt. Col. Dustin Sutton, 732nd ESFS commander.

The colonel, deployed from Misawa Air Base, Japan, described other significant successes of the detachment, saying attacks throughout Baghdad have been reduced dramatically and public confidence in the Iraqi Police forces have soared to their highest levels since the 2003 invasion.

"Your partnership with the Iraqis resulted in the development

of a professional, mature and capable police force," he said.

That success is an achievement in which the Airmen should take pride.

"You all should leave this deployment proud of what you've done," said Lederer, a native of Altus, Okla. "Thank you for all you've done. This (transfer of authority) today closes a chapter in Air Force history."

After uncasing their colors, Capt. Benjamin Hall, 94th MP Co. commander, told his troops that it was time for them to step up and ensure the ISF continue to improve the security of their country.

"The torch has officially been passed to us," said Hall. "Our mission set will be challenging but critical to the success of the Iraq Security Forces. I ask every one of you to devote 110 percent to the advise, train, assist and equip mission that brings us here today. We are the most advanced and professional army in the world. We'll utilize the resources and knowledge we have and empower the Iraqi Police ensuring country stability for years to come.

"732nd ESFS, thank you for your efforts," he said in closing. "94th MP Company, it's time for us to step up and answer the country's call. Hooah!"



Photo by Senior Airman Perry Aston
Maj. David Lederer, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, Detachment 2, commander, speaks to Airmen and Soldiers during the deactivation of the 732nd ESFS, Det. 2 and the transfer of authority of the police transition team mission to the 94th Military Police Company, July 26, at Camp Stryker, Iraq. The Soldiers will be taking over the PTT mission from the Det. 2 Airmen.

Proper use of amnesty boxes ensures safety of service members

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

It's early morning and a Soldier is on his way to work. His attention is drawn to something shining on the gravel. Curious, he walks toward it and finds an M-16 round.

He sees a nearby bunker, painted yellow with a sign identifying it as an amnesty box, so he picks up the round, walks over and drops it in the box.

That is the purpose of the amnesty box, said Sgt. 1st Class Oscar Peterson, the Victory Mayor's Cell sheriff. The amnesty box program was designed to allow service members the ability to turn in small-arms ammunition, without repercussion, for proper disposal.

Peterson said the amnesty box is for small amounts of ammunition that is .50 caliber or smaller, but lately, amnesty boxes are being misused, and the results could be deadly.

The personnel who collect ammunition from the boxes have found grenades and large amounts of ammunition, in addition to other items that should be turned in through supply channels such as pieces of various weapons and military uniforms.

When the wrong type of ammunition is placed in the amnesty boxes, the safety of others is put at risk, said Sgt. Maj.

Richard Jones, the United States Forces-Iraq J3 sergeant major. All it takes is a single incident to occur such as a grenade pin accidentally getting pulled, or an amnesty box full of ammunition that gets too hot and gets set off, and someone can get hurt or killed.

The dumping of large amounts of ammunition in the amnesty boxes is turning into one of the main safety issues as units rotate or redeploy without a replacement.

"Smaller units are coming in to replace larger units and we are seeing a large amount of bulk ammunition that was passed from the previous unit to the new unit coming in," Peterson said. "Often, they do not go through the right process and they take the easy way out by placing it in the amnesty box instead of turning it into the supply personnel."

"Amnesty boxes are being used to circumvent the system Victory Base Complex has for turning in bulk ammunition or incendiary grenades," said Mel Kelder, the USF-I safety director.

"Ammunition that does not belong in the amnesty box needs to be turned into the ammunition supply point."

The ASP on VBC is making it easy for units to turn in their bulk ammunition, said Jones. The ASP personnel will take the ammo and sign for it. If the unit doesn't have the paperwork,

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ITEMS THAT DO NOT BELONG IN AMNESTY BOXES

Uniforms

Bulk ammo

Medical supplies

Boots

Magazines

Grenades

Any ammo larger than

.50 caliber

C-4

Guns

Gun parts

Knives



Spc. Francisco Campos, with the Camp Victory Mayor's Cell, looks over the items he collected from an amnesty box on Camp Victory, Aug. 4. Among the items found were supplies from a combat lifesaver bag, uniforms, and bulk ammunition.

Neighbors, from Page 1

members said that it was a rewarding experience; especially getting to meet the children.

“The children really are the future of this country and they are just an absolute joy to interact with,” said Tech. Sgt. Amy Everhard, an Air Force member assigned to the Iraqi Training and Advising Mission. They are so warm and affectionate. They all want to give you hugs and kisses. It’s a very heartwarming experience.”

For one volunteer, this was another chance to meet local families and the soldiers who are defending this country.

“This has proven to be a fantastic break from the normal routine,” said Master Sgt. Jeremy Todd, also a member of the ITAM-AF. “I volunteered back in April for this program and now have the opportunity to volunteer again. It really is a great opportunity to talk to the families of the soldiers who are defending their own country.”

It is this fresh outlook on patriotism from an Iraqi perspective that Todd says was an unexpected bonus of

participating in the program.

“This has been a great experience and a very humbling one. These guys (Iraqi soldiers) are the true patriots,” he said. “Think about it, when people back home see us at the airport in our uniform it is fairly common for them to come up to us and thank us for our service.”

“If the Iraqi soldiers were to show up at an airport in their uniform, it could make them a target. This is just a small way we can express our gratitude for what they are doing for their own country,” Todd said.

While all the service members enjoyed the experience, they also realized events like this also help with the overall mission in Iraq.

“Our eyes are toward the future of Iraq,” Moreno said. “This is a historic time to be here; both for the Soldiers and Airmen, but also for the people of Iraq as we transition from Operation Iraqi Freedom to Operation New Dawn. The goal is a free, independent and self-sufficient Iraq. What we are doing here directly supports those goals.”

Amnesty, from Page 5

they will assist with creating the proper documents.

Another recent trend is that if an amnesty box gets full, service members are just leaving items laying next to the containers. Leaving items like ammunition or grenades out in the open creates two major problems.

“The first is the ammo or grenade could be picked up and used against our forces,” Jones said. “The second is someone could pick it up to place in the amnesty box or to turn it in properly and set it off resulting in injury or death,” he said.

Amnesty boxes, if used properly, can be a great way for people to turn in small amounts of ammunition, but when someone tries to go around the supply system and put

something in the box that doesn’t belong, that’s when problems and safety concerns arise, Kelder said.

If service members have questions about the amnesty box program, or if they see a box that is full and has items lying around it, they should call Peterson immediately at 318-485-3699.

For information about the Ammunition Supply Point located on Camp Liberty and hours of operation, call 318-242-7662.

Service members need to do the right thing and properly turn-in their ammunition, weapon parts, and other military items to ensure accountability of the items, and more importantly, the safety of their fellow service members, Peterson said.

Sisterhood Against Sexual Assault

Monthly Meeting

at

Hope Chapel

Theme for the
meeting:
Boundaries

August 16 1600-1800

A true sister is a friend who listens with her heart.

THINK SAFETY

MUZZLE AWARENESS

ALWAYS KEEP YOUR
MUZZLE
POINTED IN
A SAFE DIRECTION

ARMY SAFE
IS ARMY STRONG

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
www.flickr.com/photos/mnfiraq
www.twitter.com/USF_Iraq

Facebook -
United States Forces-Iraq
U.S. Army III Corps
Phantom Battalion
III Corps Fort Hood

Staff Judge Advocate's Office celebrates birthday



From left, Pfc. Dustin Flanery, a client services specialist with the USF-I Staff Judge Advocate office and Col. Flora Darpino, the USF-I SJA, cut the ceremonial birthday cake celebrating the SJA's 235th birthday during their ceremony July 31 at Al Faw Palace.

Runners take off at the starting line at the bottom of Signal hill on Camp Liberty for the 5k run that kicked off celebrations for the Staff Judge Advocate's 235th birthday, July 31.



Service members race to the end of the 5k run that honored the SJA's birthday and was attended by more than 650 runners.

III Corps Leaders honored at ASC dinner

Lt. Col. Robert Menti (front), commander, III Corps Special Troops Battalion, USF-I and his senior enlisted advisor Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Livengood (left), led to a dinner put on by employees of American Service Center. The two STB leaders were honored guests at the dinner

