

Victory Times



Telling the United States Forces - Iraq story

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Service members compete for spurs, honor



Spc. Leonard Petties from Baton Rouge, La., with Company B, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, leads a squad of Soldiers in a room-clearing exercise in the bath-party house in Baghdad during a spur ride at Victory Base Complex Oct. 24. For story and more photos see Page 4. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Dan Yarnall)

U.S. air advisors train Iraqi AF instructor pilots

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

United States Air Force air advisors in Iraq are responsible for training instructor pilot candidates and advising the Iraqi airmen on building the training program necessary to set up their air force for success in the years to come.

"The 52nd stood up this year for T-6 (training aircraft) flight

operations," said Brig. Gen. Scott Hanson, ITAM-AF director and 321st Air Expeditionary Wing commander. "It's an expeditionary flying training squadron teaching the Iraqi instructor pilot candidates who are going through pilot instructor training," Hanson said. "Our concept at that venue is to build their instructor pilot corps first, before they incorporate that platform into their overall pilot training pipeline."

Once the trainees learn how to fly

the T-6, they transition to the Pilot Instructor Training, where the students learn to teach what they've learned, said Capt. Ryan Smith, 52nd EFTS student flight commander.

Just a year ago, the squadron had three instructor pilots and no aircraft to set up the training squadron. Now they have 11 aircraft and a squadron of pilot trainees. The training is very similar

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Chaplain's Corner

Navigating in the fog of Iraq

By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Ira Houck
USF-I World Religious Chaplain

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight.*

Proverbs 3:5-6

It was very early in the morning. The fog was thick, but physical training was the requirement of the day. Visibility belts and few vehicles on the road provided ample opportunity to run the prescribed course. Visibility was limited to a few feet, the pavement damp and the early morning air crisp. A few runners ran past us and disappeared into the gray fog of an Iraqi morning. The only sound to break the silence was the laughing of other runners up ahead - but we could not see anyone. Knowing that others were nearby, we had courage and confidence to proceed with the run.

With the chaplain's assistant in the pack, I began to make good use of the morning hour and headed down the road. Our course was familiar but the thick fog

disoriented our team, and what once seemed familiar was now obscured. The minutes went by, and after an hour I was surprised to find that we were not in the place we wanted to be, in fact we were in unfamiliar terrain. We had been running in the fog in the wrong direction. I thought I knew where we were going, but after an hour I had to admit that we were off course! I said, "If I had only taken my compass—instead I am relying on my own sense of direction, which means we are lost in the fog."

But the chaplain's assistant knew exactly what to do, and without a demeaning comment or attitude, simply turned and said, "Follow me, I know the way."

In that moment, the proverb came to mind: "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

My assistant is a fine staff sergeant and the proverbial wisdom of her leadership reminded me of the faithfulness of Almighty God.

Everyone needs a guide one time or another. Reach out to God and you will find Him leading clearly, even in the fog of life.

SARC Smarts

Common myths regarding sexual assault:



MYTH: Only the young and attractive are assaulted

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

MYTH: 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 or act provocatively- Some victims may appear vulnerable or be intoxicated, too young, or lack mental, physical, emotional ability to resist or 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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USF-I names Career Counselor of the Year

Story and photos by Spc. Charlene Mendiola
USF-I Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Manuel Cabrera was named the United States Forces-Iraq Career Counselor of the Year during a ceremony at Camp Victory Oct. 28.

Cabrera, a career counselor with the 141st Field Artillery Regiment based at Camp Victory, earned the title and was presented a bronze statue after competing during a board against other career counselors in Iraq.

The board members quizzed the career counselors on retention rules and regulations, current events and Army programs, said Master Sgt. Richard Culley, USF-I senior career counselor, assigned to III Corps, based out of Fort Hood, Texas.

“We put this out there for counselors who would stand out from their peers,” said Culley, who is a native of Denton, Texas. “We have 75 career counselors in theater, and wanted to see the best of the best.”

“As a career counselor, there are few times that you can test yourself,” said Sgt. 1st Class John Holt, a career counselor for the 1st Battalion 21st Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, and a native of Dallas, Texas. “The only thing we have in our field is the career counselor of the year board.”

It was a great opportunity to not only reinforce some previous knowledge but also to learn something new, said Staff Sgt. Carlos Dubon, a career counselor for 1st Battalion 114th Infantry Regiment, 42nd Infantry Division, out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

The board itself was very good with by-the-book questions that tested a person’s knowledge of the regulations, said Holt, who is also based at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

“The hardest thing about going before this board is that you can be prepared, but this career field changes constantly,” said



Staff Sgt. Manuel Cabrera, Career Counselor of the 141st Field Artillery Regiment, speaks to his peers after being named USF-I Career Counselor of the Year at the Joint Visitors Bureau Hotel Oct. 28.



Staff Sgt. Manuel Cabrera sits in front of the board and answers questions at the Joint Visitors Bureau Hotel Oct. 28. Cabrera was one of several Soldiers who competed for the USF-I Career Counselor of the Year award.

Staff Sgt. Daniel Dever, career counselor for 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery Regiment based at Fort Carson, Colo. “If a counselor is not tracking the up-to-date information, they’re going to go in there and miss something.”

“It is an achievement for me and I am happy with the results.” Cabrera said. “The board was tough, but it goes to show what I am capable of.”

Cabrera has attended three career-counselor-of-the-year boards prior to this one. His previous board appearances made him more confident and determined to win this time around, he said.

“This job has its rewards. It is the best job in the Army because of the responses I receive from the Soldiers. They thank me and it feels good.”

“I want to remind people that we are out there, still doing a job. We take care of Soldiers and we represent our chain of command and our units,” he said.

“This is a great event because you have a winner, but there is no loser.” Culley said. “A Soldier may have not won the board, but they must take what they’ve learned from this and move on to the next and keep going until they win.”



SPURRING EACH OTHER

Spc. Jamal Blair and Spc. Mark Cofield, both with XVIII Airborne Corps, are tested in a react to fire drill during a spur ride on Victory Base Complex by III Corps Special Troops Battalion, Oct. 24.



Phantom Battalion conducts sixth Spur Ride of deployment

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Dan Yarnall
USF-I Public Affairs

Members of United States Forces-Iraq were offered the chance to test their endurance and earn their spurs through a long-standing cavalry tradition, Oct 24.

That day, III Corps Special Troops Battalion held its sixth spur ride on

Victory Base Complex during the deployment.

The STB hosted six spur rides since April for all members of USF-I. A total of 285 service members have taken part in the challenges.

III Corps STB Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Livengood said that the planning for these spur rides began before the corps left Fort Hood. His goal was to show the Soldiers what they can accomplish when they come together as a team.

“The intent behind it has always been to challenge the Soldiers and build



Pfc. Mitchell Moss from Chicago, Ill., with Company Brigade pulls rear security as his squad participates in a spur ride on Victory Base Complex, Oct. 24. Moss earned his spurs during the ride.

esprit de corps,” said Livengood.

First Sgt. Christopher Reeves, of III Corps STB Headquarters Support Company, said that when Livengood told him he was going to take part in hosting a spur ride in Iraq, Reeves wasn’t sure what that even was.

He says that now, looking back 10 months later, he feels that they have definitely been good events based on the reaction of those who made it through.

“The Soldiers have come up to me and told me what a challenge it was to them and how well organized it was,” said Reeves. “It makes me proud to be a



Spc. Christopher Oldham a food service specialist USF-I STB participates in a room-clearing exercise in the Victory over America Palace.

TOGETHER TO SUCCESS



Company B, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 256th Infantry Regiment participates in a room-clearing exercise in the Victory over the Spur Ride hosted by III Corps on Victory



Soldiers push an armored Humvee around the Phantom Motor Pool during the III Corps Spur Ride at Victory Base Complex, Oct 24. This was one of the first stations of the day intended to build teamwork.

► Master Sgt. Russell Collie with USF-1 J-3 Air Missile Defense walks across a balance beam during the III Corps Spur Ride. This was III Corps sixth Spur Ride at Victory Base Complex since their year long deployment in Iraq.



part of it.”

During the event III Corps extended this teambuilding to members of XVIII Airborne Corps. Eight Fort Bragg Soldiers joined in on this last ride.

Specialist Allen Perry, a military policeman with XVIII Airborne Corps, serving with Company B, STB, found out about the spur ride during a newcomers’ brief upon arrival at Camp Victory. He said that he knew immediately that he wanted to participate in the event.

“Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Livengood showed us a video of a spur ride. It looked like some hard times but it looked like fun,” said Perry. “Since I always enjoy a challenge, I thought I’d give it a try.”

Perry, a Yucca Valley, Calif., native, said that it meant a lot to be able to share in the cavalry experience with a few of his new battle buddies.

“It was hard but an exciting and awesome challenge. I am grateful for the opportunity III Corps has provided,” he said.

500 / 1000 Mile Club promotes physical fitness

Story by Sgt. Tanya-Jo Moller
USF-I Public Affairs

Finding something to do within the walls of a military base can be challenging, so to become combat ready and promote physical fitness, a Navy officer at Camp Slayer created a running program.

In January, Lt. j.g. Darryl D. Diptee started the Baghdad 500/1,000 mile challenge, and Spc. Faith Strong of the 546th Area Support Medical Company, who is currently assisting with managing the program, said it has been growing in popularity ever since.

Although Diptee, a Jacksonville, Fla., native, then a knowledge management officer with the United States Forces-Iraq was not fond of running, he said he pushed himself to develop a healthy lifestyle and found that recording his miles was a huge motivator.

"After tracking my own miles, I realized that I could hit 1,000 miles in 12 months," said Diptee.

Diptee originally created the 500/1,000 mile challenge to motivate others to improve their physical fitness, and the concept became viral.

"The challenge gave me one more reason to stay active, to get to the gym and run," said New York City native Staff Sgt. Christopher T. Reed, a shift leader with the 546th ASMC.

Diptee redeployed to Florida in August, but Strong and Reed are keeping the challenge going by forwarding the mileage tracker to all those who are interested.

"A large number of participants have shown interest in the challenge since we took over in August," Reed said.

The miles don't have to be from running. Miles

from biking, using the elliptical machine or walking can be used toward finishing the challenge, so everyone can do it, Strong said. The tracker calculates a person's progress based on their desired goal and is honor-based. All they have to do is put in their miles.

Having a solid goal to work toward and being able to view your progress over time is a good selling point for many, said Diptee.

More than 1,000 service members and civilians have embraced the challenge, some losing as much as 50 pounds of body fat. A conservative estimate shows 10,000 pounds of combined body fat was burned by all who participated, said Diptee.

Along with forwarding the tracker, Strong and Reed keep up with T-shirt orders. The T-shirts are sold for \$15 and a portion of the proceeds are donated to the Iraqi Boy and Girl Scouts. "We just put in an order of about 200 T-shirts," said Reed.

More than \$3,000 has been raised for the organization so far, Diptee said.

Participants of the challenge do not receive an award or certificate. The reward, Strong said, is the satisfaction of knowing that you were motivated enough to complete all those miles.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Roger Dey

Soldiers participating in the III Corps Historical Half add 13.1 miles to their goal as part of the 500 / 100 Mile Challenge. The challenge began in January and encourages service members to improve their physical fitness by keeping track of the miles they run.



Photo by Sgt. Tanya-Jo Moller

Spc. Sherry A. Thompson, a member of the 546th Area Support Medical Company, runs on a treadmill for the 500/1,000 mile challenge.

Kidnapping U.S. personnel is a stated goal of anti-U.S. forces.

We must take personal responsibility to protect ourselves from this threat. Take simple actions to protect yourself and your teammates to avoid or lessen the chance of abduction.

- Keep a close eye on your battle buddy and frequently check accountability of your fellow Soldiers.
- Maintain a calm, subdued, professional profile. Do not bring unnecessary attention to yourself or your fellow Soldiers.
- Do not let your guard down. Maintain OPSEC and do not discuss personal information with strangers.
- Always maintain control of identification, communication equipment and sensitive items.
- Maintain situational awareness. Scan your operating environment for threats. Frequently scan your sector in 360 degrees. Make note of routes of approach to your current location.
- Constantly ask yourself, "What could happen right now?" Be alert for that possible event.
- Always drive with your windows rolled up and doors locked. Open doors and hatches only when absolutely necessary to accomplish the mission. Secure outside access to gunners hatches.
- Look for unusual or suspicious behavior in the local population.
- Get familiar with the normal activity in your immediate area. Report any suspicious activity to the chain of command.
- Establish a communications schedule to let your unit know that you are OK.
- All U.S. personnel should be within visual and auditory range of another at all times. Ask yourself, "Where's my buddy?"
- Do not set predictable routines or patterns for the enemy to exploit.
- Maintain safe distances from crowded areas or instances of civil unrest, such as protests.
- If captured, do everything possible to escape.

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

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to training in the U.S. except for the language barrier, cultural differences and the fact that their mission is conducted in a combat zone.

"In the U.S. we have a very structured program and eliminate many variables. However, when we train here in a combat zone we don't control all those variables quite as well. We have to be a lot more flexible," said Smith.

The goal is to develop, with the Iraqi air force, a successful flying T-6 training program.

"As long as we're here, our job is to set them up with the best pilot training program that we can offer," said Smith, deployed from Vance AFB, Okla. "So ideally, as we get closer and closer to the end of the mission, we're handing more and more of the pilot training over to the Iraqis who we're training right now. Within the next year we'll step back further and further to the point that they will be running the

briefings, making the schedules and training the new student pilots as they come in."

Training with the U.S. air advisors and the chance to become an instructor pilot in the Iraqi Air Force is what motivates the candidates.

"I'm happy I get this chance to be an instructor," said 2nd Lt. Issa Amen, a student pilot with Iraqi Training Squadron Three. "We get a chance to get our training from the best pilots."

Lt. Col. Hamid Hussein, Training Squadron Three commander, agreed. "All of them are very experienced, very good people, very easy to work with and they are providing everything they can to build the Iraqi Air Force."

The excitement the Iraqis have for their air force is shared by their air advisors.

"It's an awesome experience to

take them through it and be with them from the beginning," he said. "To just see the smile on the Iraqi maintainers as they see this airplane is great. They see that it says 'Iraqi air force' on it. That's a symbol to them that their air force is being rebuilt. It's a great reward to see that and their enthusiasm."



An Iraqi air force student pilot prepares for a training mission Sept. 26, at Tikrit Air Base. The pilots are learning to fly the T-6 Texan II.

Victory Voices

Why did you join the military?



**Petty Officer 3rd Class
Chester Harden**
Religious Program
Specialist
Co. B, III Corps STB

"I wanted to get out of my hometown and eventually go to college."



**1st Lt. Sambriddhi
Winkler**
Executive Officer
Co. A
III Corps STB

"I wanted to serve the country I love."



Pfc. Delon Poulsen
Food Service Specialist
HSC III Corps

"A better life for me and my future family."



Maj. Darrell Board
Chief of Manpower Personnel
Air Component
Coordination Element

"The opportunity to do something different and travel."