

Victory Times



Telling the United States Forces - Iraq story

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All smiles: U.S., Iraqi troops help students



Maj. James Sasser, executive officer for the 105th Military Police Battalion, gives a backpack and school supplies to a young girl in Risalah, Iraq, Nov. 23. Sasser was part of a joint humanitarian mission conducted with the local Iraqi Army.

Story and photos by Spc. Joseph Vine
USF-I Public Affairs

Giggles and laughs echoed through the halls and classrooms while young students lined up against the walls. The nearby Soldiers were reminded of their own children as the students waited for their turn to be given backpacks and school supplies from the Iraqi Army and United States Soldiers.

Soldiers from three U.S. units partnered with the Iraqi Army in Risalah for a joint humanitarian aid mission at a local school Nov. 23.

Troopers from the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, 105th Military Police Battalion and the 322nd Medical Company, pulled security and gave the donations to the children.

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Mail rooms prepare for holiday season

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

The holiday season is here and that means the deadline to ship packages back to home in time for Christmas is fast approaching.

Likewise, families back home need to be aware of the deadlines as well if they hope to get packages delivered to their service member in time.

“This time of the season is always the busiest for an establishment like this,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Jon Klentzman, a yeoman with the Naval Postal Detachment 4484, who is the supervisor at the Camp Victory post office. “People depend on us to get these gifts to their loved ones.”

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Spc. Tristian Collins with Headquarters Support Company, Special Troops Battalion, III Corps assists the mail room staff as they sort packages.

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Spiritual resiliency is key to readiness

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

The ancient Greek epics offer compelling insights into our own experiences. Homer's classic, "Odyssey," is the epic homecoming of a Greek warrior returning from 10 years of fighting in the Trojan War.

Odysseus is the central figure of the story. He is the last fighter to make it home from Troy and he endures a cruel journey back to his wife and son. Odysseus becomes disconnected from his family and society by wartime deployment. "Odyssey" can be understood as an allegory for real problems of combat veterans returning to civil society.

In the book "Odysseus in America," Jonathan Shay puts into words what veterans have come to know: "Odyssey" is the story of the veteran wounded by the trauma of war. He also shows the reader how

positive qualities of community, realistic training and supportive leadership are three combat multipliers and are essential components for healing traumatic, unseen wounds of war.

The USF-I chaplain recently conducted realistic, experiential-based training led by the Parker-Sammis Group. The Spiritual Fitness Initiative promotes warrior wellness, resiliency and acknowledges the importance of integrating personal spirituality into a life-long plan that supports readiness, relationship integrity and balance.

The objectives of this training included building a personal resiliency plan, telling the story of spiritual fitness, and transferring the benefits of spiritual fitness to sustain the force.

One of the essential truths emerging from the "Odyssey" and the Spiritual Fitness Initiative is the necessity to maintain personal connections to a spiritual or faith community. Remain

connected to God to stay connected with self and society.

This is not only emotionally comforting, it is actually found to be a powerful medicine for treating the unseen wounds of the warrior. Maintaining a strong network of social connections is an important factor in maintaining resiliency.

Holy Scripture testifies to the power of healing found in the worship of God. Religious services and fellowship assemblies provide access to the source of healing. Becoming involved in outreach to the poor, the destitute, the imprisoned, and the desperate hungry may help the veteran to realize that suffering and trauma do not just exist in the theaters of combat.

Connecting with God and others who practice spiritual fitness leads to healing the traumas associated with war.

SARC Smarts

If you are raped or sexually assaulted



- Go to a safe place and call military police (CID agents investigate sexual assault cases)
- Don't shower, change clothes, brush your teeth or hair, or "clean up" yourself or location of the attack in any way (you may destroy evidence)
- Call a friend, rape hotline, or chain of command - request a support person, or - go to a hospital or clinic and have medical personnel call the police (take a change of clothes with you - clothes worn during the assault may be kept as evidence.)

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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Army chief of chaplains visits Camp Victory

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Edward Daileg
USF-I Public Affairs

The Army chief of chaplains arrived in Iraq Nov. 22 to begin his week-long trip to visit with unit leaders, their ministry teams and Soldiers throughout the country.

Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) Douglas L. Carver started his visit at Camp Victory, Nov. 23, to meet the United States Forces-Iraq leadership and about 40 unit ministry teams.

“It gives me the opportunity to speak with our Soldiers and provide professional updates to our unit ministry teams,” said Carver.

“It’s very exciting when the Army chief of chaplains comes around,” said Chaplain (Col.) Michael Lembke, the USF-I chaplain. “He is very motivating and makes time to meet with Soldiers face-to-face.”

Specialist Ernestina Nyarko, a chaplain assistant for Headquarters Support Company, 299th Brigade Support Battalion, said meeting the chief of the chaplains is motivating for the unit ministry teams.

“It takes selfless service and courage to come out here and spend time with the Soldiers,” said Nyarko. “It gives me the strength to do more and to open my heart to provide selfless service to my fellow Soldiers.”



Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) Douglas L. Carver, Army chief of chaplains, speaks to Chaplain (Lt. Col.) David Tish, chaplain for the 116th Garrison Command, at Hope Chapel.

Specialist Jonathan Payne, a chaplain assistant for the 303rd Ordinance Disposal Battalion, said that spending time with the chief of chaplains is what he needed to push him through the rest of his deployment.

“Seeing the chief of chaplains come out and meet with Soldiers is a great moral booster for any Soldier,” said Payne. “He inspired many Soldiers today.”

Lembke said Carver’s visit allowed him to see the unit ministry teams at work.

“The chief of chaplains sets the policy for the whole chaplain corps; with his visit he gets a vision on how those policies are applied in theater,” said Lembke.

This is Carver’s seventh trip to Iraq to visit with the unit ministry teams and deployed service members.

He said one of his goals for this visit was to bring the greetings from the Army’s senior leaders and remind Soldiers that they are not forgotten and that they remain in the hearts and prayers of the American people.



Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) Douglas L. Carver, Army chief of chaplains, speaks to about 40 unit ministry teams at Hope Chapel during his week-long visit to Iraq, Nov. 23.



Photo by Spc. Charlene Mendiola

Country musician Aaron Tippin performs for service members during his Turkey with the Troops tour, Nov. 23 on Camp Liberty. Tippin traveled throughout Iraq to play his music for deployed service members.



► Sport Oasis Dining Facility food service specialists dress up for the Thanksgiving meals at Camp Victory, Nov. 25. The dining facility personnel wore costumes and decorated the building to help make the holiday more festive for the service members.

Service members celebrate Thanksgiving with food, entertainment

Story by Staff Sgt. Edward Daileg
USF-I Public Affairs

Service members and civilians at Camp Victory enjoyed a traditional Thanksgiving Day meal with all the trimmings Nov. 25 at the Sports Oasis Dining Facility.

During the special day, the dining

facility served more than 4,100 pounds of turkey, 1,000 pounds of stuffing, 780 pounds of sweet potatoes, and more than 305 pies.

Senior leaders from the USF-I staff sections and other units on the base served the troops during the day while the Soldiers who work at the dining facility wore costumes, ensured the

building was festive and that everyone left happy and full.

“We worked extremely hard to do the decorations to make Soldiers feel the Thanksgiving holiday,” said Spc. Orlando A. Luna, a food operation specialist with Headquarters Support Company, Special Troops Battalion, III Corps.

“We want to give everyone the best traditional Thanksgiving meal and put a smile to their faces when they walk out of here,” said Sgt. 1st Class Brian W. Gorby, food operation management noncommissioned officer with HSC, STB, III Corps.

Service members and civilians line up for their Thanksgiving meal.



Photo by Spc. Charlene Mendiola



Photo by Spc. Charlene Mendiola



Photo by Staff Sgt. Edward Daileg

Sergeant Maj. Vincent Denning, senior enlisted advisor for the USF-I Inspector General, serves Thanksgiving dinner to service members.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Edward Daileg

Pfc. Monica Diaz, a food service specialist at the Sports Oasis Dining Facility, sets up a fruit display.



Photo by Spc. Charlene Mendiola

The festive display in front of the Sports Oasis Dining Facility helped to set the mood during Thanksgiving Day.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Edward Daileg

Service members and civilians sit down to relax and enjoy their Thanksgiving meal.



Photo by Spc. Charlene Mendiola

Service members and civilians attend a service at Hope Chapel to celebrate Thanksgiving Day.

Humanitarian, from page 1 —

“We gave school supplies and goodie bags to 450 students,” said Staff Sgt. Josef Gomez from Largo, Fla., and a platoon sergeant with 2nd Platoon, 2nd Squadron, 3rd ACR.

“The students were very excited, but were nervous and apprehensive,” he said. “It’s not every day they receive supplies from the U.S. and Iraqi armies.”

The students eventually warmed up to the Soldiers and started to catch the attention of other children that were in the nearby area.

“Students from other schools that just happened to be walking by were also given school supplies,” said Spc. Joshua Rice from Asheville N.C., and an MP with the 105th MP Bn.

Gomez said charities and families from the U.S. donated the school supplies.

“It’s great to see them donating their time and money for the Iraqi children on the other side of the world,” he said.

“The local communities see us providing supplies for their children; they won’t perceive us as a threat but more as us trying to help them,” said 1st Lt. David J. Dean from Jacksonville Fla., and a tank commander with 2nd Platoon, 2nd Squadron, 3rd ACR

“We are trying to facilitate a friendly working relationship with the Iraqi



Sgt. 1st Class Glant West with the 322 Medical Company, hands out backpacks and school supplies to students as part of a joint humanitarian aid mission with the Iraqi Army in Risalah, Iraq, Nov. 23.

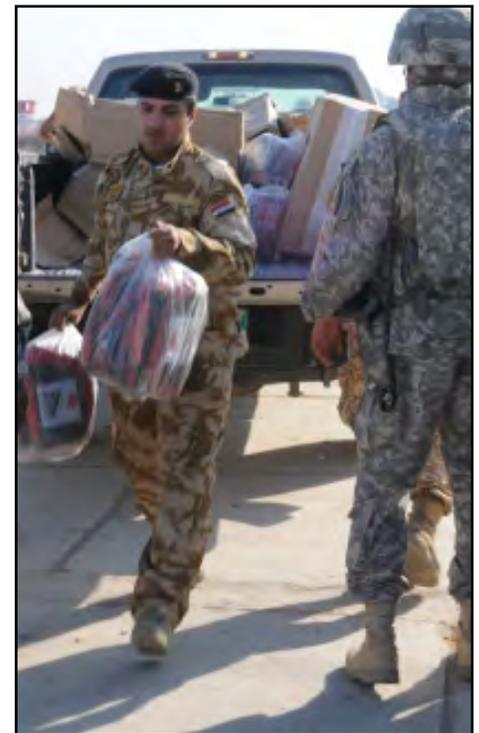
military and the people of Iraq,” said Gomez.

“Having the IA involved and visible makes them more legitimate in the neighborhoods,” said Dean. “Once we leave, the community will see the IA out in the neighborhoods helping out whenever they need it.”

“We have been adjusting our standard operating procedures in order to advise and assist the Iraqi military by reinforcing infrastructure and helping to facilitate the stabilization of Iraq,” said Gomez.

Dean said that the 3rd ACR and other units will continue partnering with the local IA units to

conduct joint humanitarian aid missions during their deployment.



An Iraqi soldier unloads a truck filled with school supplies during a joint humanitarian aid mission in Risalah, Iraq, Nov. 23.



United States and Iraqi Soldiers hand out backpacks to elementary school students during a joint humanitarian aid mission in Risalah, Iraq, Nov. 23.

Unsung Hero



Spc. Yavergina T. Hairston is recognized as this week's Unsung Hero and received a Certificate of Achievement from Brig. Gen. Joseph DiSalvo, Deputy Chief of Staff, United States Forces-Iraq, at Al Faw Palace Nov. 26. Hairston received the certificate for her exemplary performance as the Task Force Phantom, Co. C signal support systems specialist.

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

What is your favorite physical activity to do while deployed?



**Private 1st Class
Chris Posthumos**
Infantryman

Co. A 2nd Brigade
1st Battalion
56th Infantry Regiment

*"I like to run
Z-lake."*



**Private 1st Class
Ted Sparks**
Operations Specialist

40th Expeditionary
Signal Battalion

*"I run 3-5
miles a
day."*



**Specialist
Phillip Smith**
Chaplain's Assistant

40th Expeditionary
Signal Battalion

*"I play
basketball at
least twice a
week."*



**Senior Master Sgt.
Phillip Smith**
Public Affairs Team Chief

Air Component
Coordination Element

*"I run
in the
Marathons
at Camp
Victory."*



Spc. Tristian Collins and Sgt. Greg LeJune both with HSC, STB, III Corps, work together to sort out packages for delivery to units on Victory Base Complex, Nov. 24.

Mail, from page 1

In anticipation of the holiday mail rush, both the post office, which handles all outgoing mail, and the Camp Victory mail room, which handles all incoming mail, are ready for the increased workload.

“Postal inspectors are placed outside of the building to assist in filling out forms and inspecting packages prior to entering the building,” said Klentzman. “My goal is to reduce the amount of traffic and minimize the confusion.”

The extra assistance will expedite the process for the customers, he said.

To ensure that packages arrive on time, all items must be mailed out no later than Dec. 6, Klentzman said.

The deadline is even shorter for families who want to send packages to service members here.

According to the United States Postal Service, sending first-class mail letters, cards, and priority mail packages from the U.S. to service members in Iraq must be done by Dec. 4 in order for

them to arrive by Christmas day.

However, the closer people push the deadline, the higher the risk for packages to get caught up in the holiday rush, said Sgt. Greg LeJune of Headquarters Support Company, Special Troops Battalion, III Corps, and noncommissioned officer in charge of the mail room that handles all incoming packages for Camp Victory residents.

He said that the workload is already increasing and additional service members are tasked to help ensure everyone gets their mail quickly during the holiday period.

“Incoming mail packages have increased in the last weeks,” said LeJune. “Because it is the busiest

time of the year, I have requested for additional help from other units within Camp Victory to assist with picking up and sorting out mail.

“The demand for assistance is vital to guarantee that each service member receives their mail in a timely manner,” LeJune said.

The post office is open daily from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Unit personnel authorized to pick up mail from the mail room can do so from 3-5 p.m. daily.



Check CHUday

Each Tuesday Check The Following In Your CHU

- Power strips are free of debris and clothing
- Electrical devices not in use are unplugged
- Power strips and outlets are not overloaded
- Smoke detector is operational
- Fire extinguisher is serviceable (in the green)
- Room is neat and orderly

If you experience a fire or shock contact TF SAFE at 318-485-7143 or Your Mayor Cell.