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ESTABLISHED IN 1917 TO HONOR THOSE WHO SERVE



NOVEMBER 19, 2010

Water filtration system, irrigation pump improves quality of life for Iraqi citizens

By Spc. David Strayer
109th MPAD
USD-N Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – Members of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, worked in partnership with local Iraqi Emergency Response Unit police and government officials to establish a reverse osmosis water filtration system and water irrigation pump in the Na' Amah and Al-Aali rural areas of Tikrit, Nov. 14.

The water filtration and irrigation systems are the first to be utilized in their respective areas and are expected to help local Iraqi citizens improve and sustain a higher quality of life in their areas, said 1st Lt. Matthew Wolfe, civil affairs officer, 1st Bn., 27th Inf. Regt., 2nd AAB.

“The presence of a reliable source of clean drinking water is crucial, especially in rural areas such as the Na' Amah village area,” said Wolfe, referring to the recently installed reverse osmosis water purification system.

The filtration system reduces the cost of getting clean drinking water to the village by more than 50 percent, hav-

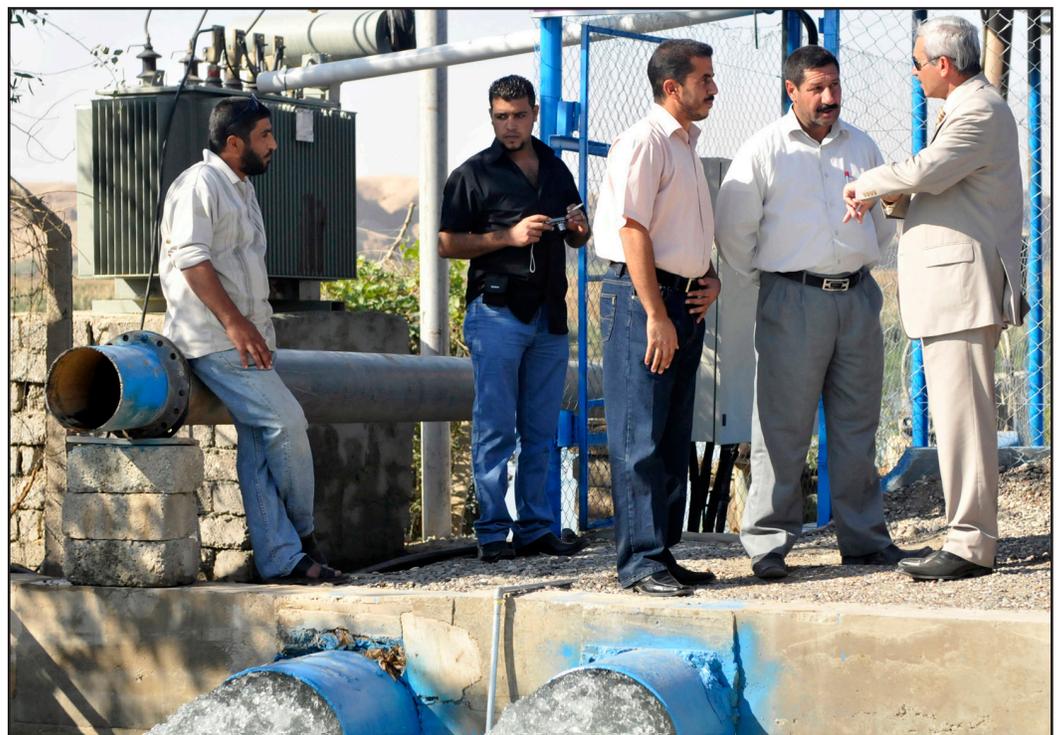


Photo by Spc. David Strayer

Iraqi Engineers speak with Retired Gen. Abdulah Al Jaburi, a provincial council member, during the opening ceremony for an irrigation pump system at the Al-Aali village, Tikrit, Iraq, Nov. 14, 2010. The irrigation pump will support more than 300 local farmers in the area, whose crops will help support the entire area consisting of more than 600 families.

ing an immediate positive economic impact on the area, he explained.

The project will help to improve sanitation and overall health in developing children and elderly whose immune systems may be greatly affected by contaminated drinking water, Wolfe added.

“The reverse osmosis water filtration system that we have opened up today is excellent for the people in this rural area of Na' Amah,” said retired Iraqi Army Gen. Abdulah Al Jaburi, a provincial council member and former IA battal-

ion commander. “The system will give over 250 families in the area direct access to over 18,000 liters of clean drinking water per day,” said Abdulah Al Jaburi, who supervises the establishment of all projects that aim to increase quality of

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WARRIOR
LONGKNIFE
DEVIL
FIT FOR ANY TEST
IRONHORSE
LONGKNIFE
WARRIOR

STEADFAST AND LOYAL
IRONHORSE
FIT FOR ANY TEST
DEVIL
LONGKNIFE
WARRIOR

**IRONHORSE
STRONG**

Soldier of the Week



Photo by Spc. Andrew Ingram, USD-N PAO

Spc. Samalaula Etelagi, an information systems operator, assigned to Company C, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, U.S. Division-North, was instrumental in designing, developing, and implementing the Task Force Ironhorse Secret Internet Protocol Router portal. Etelagi took initiative, working with the 3rd Infantry Division portal manager and staff to ensure all data, information and knowledge for each division section was saved and transferred from Task Force Marne, 3rd Inf. Div. to Task Force Ironhorse.

She worked long hours to accomplish the mission, ensuring that there was no loss in knowledge and information.

Etelagi ensured the division was communicating with subordinate brigades. Her technical and tactical expertise and tremendous work ethic make her the "Ironhorse Strong" Soldier of the Week.

Etelagi's attention to detail, selfless service and commitment to mission accomplishment is in keeping with the finest traditions of military service.

"When I started this job, everything I did was exciting because I was learning something new, and I am still learning every day. The more I worked the better I got."



Spc. Samalaula Etelagi, an information systems operator assigned to Company C, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, U.S. Division-North, manages the Task Force Ironhorse portal, at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Nov. 18. Etelagi was awarded the honor of "Ironhorse Strong" Soldier of the week for her efforts in making the transition of authority between Task Force Marne and Task Force Ironhorse smooth and efficient.

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THE IVY LEAF

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**1st Advise and Assist Task Force
1st Infantry Division**

**2nd Advise and Assist Brigade
25th Infantry Division**

**4th Advise and Assist Brigade
1st Cavalry Division**

Everyone is critical to success of the mission

By Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel A. Dailey
Command Sgt. Maj., U.S. Division-North
COB Speicher, Iraq

The Soldiers and service members of Task Force Ironhorse and 4th Infantry Division are committed to the ongoing mission in support of Operation New Dawn, as we partner with the Iraqi Security Forces, setting the stage for future strategic relationships between the country of Iraq and the United States.

Our mission, conducting stability operations to support Iraq's continued development, is a vital and important role. Every Soldier has a duty and responsibility and must understand that their actions are key to the success of our mission.

Partnership with the ISF, now more than ever before, is critical to their continued development and the accomplishment of their mission to build a safe, free nation for the people of Iraq to develop and prosper.

Along with the successful accomplishment of the mission, one of mine and the commanding general's top priorities remains force protection. Despite the degradation of attacks directed against U.S. forces, the enemy threat is real and is a significant danger to the Soldiers and service members of the task force. Leaders and Soldiers at all levels need to maintain a level of security to protect our service members, civilians and Iraqi counterparts and prevent enemy forces from harming anyone.

One of the ways we do this is through safety. I ask that leaders and Soldiers remain safety conscience. The abiding by all safety precautions prior to, during and after execution of all missions is critical to the Soldiers' welfare.

Leaders and Soldiers maintain safety through standards and discipline. Executed by all and constantly checked and en-

forced by everyone, it is important that we maintain standards and discipline across the force. Using battle buddies at all times, ground guides and frequently assessing areas for safety hazards are some of the ways we maintain a safe work environment on our bases.

The most important asset in Task Force Ironhorse is the Soldier. The welfare of each individual team member is equally critical to the success of our mission here in Iraq.

Leaders and Soldiers need to spend time

with their fellow comrades every day. We must ensure that the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical well-being of every individual within our team is cared for to ensure that Task Force Ironhorse remains fit to fight and ready for any test.

One initiative we are employing as a task force to assist leaders and Soldiers with the components of comprehensive fitness is opening the U.S. Division-North Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Center located at Contingency Operating Base Speicher.

The mission of the new center is to develop and support the pillars of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness – physical, emotional, spiritual, Family and social strength of our Soldiers in Task Force Ironhorse – by providing programs, facilities and services. Our Soldiers and service members can visit the CSF Center, what was previously Freedom Rest, to attend classes led by behavioral health and combat stress teams and chaplains.

The CSF center will also host retention and career counseling services, master fitness trainers, master resilience trainers, and dietitians, as well as many other services. These expanded services will be available for every U.S. Division-North Soldier and service member to just relax and take time away from the stress of work and the mission.

Again, every Soldier and service member across USD-N is a critical asset to the mission here in Iraq. You are part of history in the making, and you should be proud of the many contributions you make in writing the final chapter of yet another successful campaign in U.S. history. I look forward to the days ahead, the successful accomplishment of our mission, and having the opportunity to serve with each and every one of you.

Steadfast and Loyal!
IRONHORSE9

Five Soldiers naturalized, become American citizens



U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Tim Volkert, USF-I PAO

Five Soldiers of the 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, deployed to U.S. Division-North in support of Operation New Dawn, took the Oath of Allegiance to become American citizens during a naturalization ceremony at Al Faw Palace, Camp Victory, Iraq, Nov. 11. USD-N Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel A. Dailey, senior enlisted leader of Task Force Ironhorse and the 4th Infantry Division, center, congratulated the Soldiers, now American citizens; from left, Spc. Lennart Magi, an artilleryman from Forrest Hills, N.Y., assigned to Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 11th Field Artillery Regiment; Spc. Diego Matabaranos, a power generation equipment repairer from San Jacinto, Calif., assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Support Battalion; Spc. Chung Hang Ko, a motor transport operator from Santa Rosa, Calif., assigned to Company A, 2nd BSB; Staff Sgt. Rush Ngiramengior, an infantryman from Koror, Republic of Palau, assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment; and Pfc. Jose Martinez-Soriano, an infantryman from Brooklyn, N.Y., assigned to Company B, 1st Bn., 21st Inf. Regt.; all "Warriors" of the 2nd AAB, 25th Inf. Div.



IA engineers clear path toward safety in Iraq

By Spc. Robert England
2nd AAB Public Affairs
25th Inf. Div., USD-N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARHORSE, Iraq – Soldiers from the 66th Engineer Company, attached to 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, accompanied Iraqi Army engineers with the 5th Field Engineering Regiment, 5th Iraqi Army Division, during a route clearance mission in Diyala province, Iraq, Nov. 4.

Capt. Christopher Pierce, commander of the 66th Eng. Company, met with Col. Raad, battalion commander, 5th Field Eng. Regt., in September to develop a training plan to prepare the Iraqi unit to conduct route clearance missions.

“He told us where he needs assistance in training, so we developed a route clearance training academy based on what he thinks his soldiers need to improve on,” said Pierce, who hails from a La Sal, Utah.

Throughout the month of October, the 66th Eng. Company Soldiers worked with their



Photo by Spc. Robert England, 2nd AAB Public Affairs, 25th Inf. Div., USD-N

First Lt. Andrew Schmidt (far right), a platoon leader assigned to 66th Engineer Company, attached to 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, U.S. Division-North, supervises a briefing conducted by Iraqi Army engineers prior to a route clearance mission, Nov. 4, 2010 in the Diyala province, Iraq. The mission was the culmination of a month-long training course provided by the 66th Eng. Company to strengthen the IA engineers' route clearance skills.

Iraqi counterparts on a variety of skills ranging from basic combat drills to mission planning.

The route clearance mission

led by the IA engineers was the culmination of the month-long training course provided by 66th Eng. Company to strengthen IA engineers' route clearance skills.

Staff Sgt. Robert Koppenhoefer, a native of Aurora, Ill., and a platoon sergeant with the 66th Eng. Company, said at one point in the training, his Soldiers set up a series of situational training exercises to evaluate the IA engineers' reactions to an explosion from a simulated improvised explosive device.

Koppenhoefer said the Soldiers of 66th Eng. Company began training the IA engineers on basic instruction, progressing to react-to-contact drills with simulated Improvised Explosive Devices.

They also trained IA officers on planning and preparation for

a mission and how to conduct mission briefings, he said.

Planning plays a crucial role in ensuring the mission's success before any vehicles leave the compound, said 1st Lt. Andrew Schmidt, a platoon leader assigned to the 66th Eng. Company.

Understanding where an enemy is likely to attack allows the IA engineers to coordinate preemptive countermeasures, and minimize the likelihood of suffering casualties, said Schmidt, who hails from Sweet Home, Ore.

With the plan in place and the high-risk areas identified, the IA engineers must use situational awareness to spot suspicious items or behavior while on patrol, said Schmidt.

Anything that looks out of place is considered suspicious enough to warrant closer



Photo by Spc. Robert England

Iraqi Army and U.S. forces tactical vehicles provide security while IA engineers examine a suspicious item on the side of the road during a route clearance mission, Nov. 4, in the Diyala province, Iraq. The mission was the culmination of a month-long training course provided by the 66th Engineer Company, attached to 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, U.S. Division-North, to strengthen IA engineers' route clearance skills.

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life in the Salah Ah Din province of Iraq.

Prior to the installation of the water filtration system, water had to be shipped into the village via tanker truck from the Tigris River.

“This method was costly, inefficient and did not yield water of a suitable drinking quality for the villagers,” he said.

Wolfe said the procurement of essential services such as water, agriculture and security is essential to the success of local Iraqi communities, and it is his battalion’s goal to work with the ISF and local government officials on as many of these projects as possible.

The Soldiers of 1st Bn., 27th Inf. Regt., also partnered with local Iraqi Police and government officials in the development of a water irrigation system located on the east side of the Tigris River.

“The addition of this irrigation canal is considered a very important event for the area of the Al-Aali village,” said Mohamed Al Jaburi, an Iraqi contractor who served as the conduit through which U.S. forces and local Iraqi government officials conducted business during all phases of the water irrigation canal project.

Mohamed Al Jaburi said the impact of the irrigation canal will be widespread and long lasting, immediately improving the agricultural capability of more than 350 farmers, whose increased crop output will benefit more than 650 families in the area.

“The irrigation canal will pump more than 2,400 liters per minute to support more than 400 acres of farm land,” he said. “Such an increase in agricultural production will not only improve quality of life for all the families in the area, it will also stimulate agricultural and economic growth in the area.”



Photo by Spc. David Strayer, 109th MPAD, USD-N PAO

Second Lt. Lowell Garthwaite, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, discusses how the new reverse osmosis water filtration system will benefit the local community with an Iraqi police officer during an opening ceremony in Tikrit, Iraq, Nov., 14. Soldiers of 1st Bn., 27th Inf. Reg. worked with the local Iraqi governments in the Al Na’ Amah area to establish the water filtration system that will provide more than 18,000 liters of clean, potable drinking water daily to the villagers in the area.

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inspection, he explained.

Early warning signs include running shoes where sandals would be commonplace, or large groups of people congregating in one area as if they were awaiting a show, he said.

Schmidt also said freshly paved sections of a street or small mounds of sand can indicate a hidden explosive device.

“They look for anything out of the ordinary,” he explained. “There are many factors, but people and their behavior play a major part. They also look for signs in the environment such as disturbed earth.”

In the event that something appears suspicious, the IA engineers proceed with caution as they investigate the item in question, utilizing special tools to accomplish their tasks while preserving Soldiers’ safety.

Vehicles, such as the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle, are an integral factor in mission success, providing

armored transportation and the ability to sift through potentially dangerous materials with an extending arm and claw from within the vehicle.

Schmidt said that much of the equipment used by IA engineers shares similarities with tools used by U.S. Army combat engineers.

Once the IA engineers know their environment and understand what to look for, it is important to know the types of potential attacks, Schmidt said. The IA engineers trained on the different types of ordnance used in constructing IEDs, which the enemy has been known to use in conjunction with small arms fire.

Operation New Dawn has only been underway for about two months, but the concept is nothing new, said Pierce.

Iraqi Security Forces have been working alongside U.S. Forces for years, observing and learning skills and tactics that yield

successful results, he said.

The performance of the 5th Field Eng. Regt. is indicative of the IA engineers knowledge accrued from years of experience working with U.S. forces, he said.

“They’re pretty competent right now,” Pierce said. “It’s pretty amazing how well they can already perform their job.

They have been doing route clearance for awhile, but their techniques needed a little fine-tuning, so we’ve showed them what works for us. Hopefully they can take from that and build on it.”

He also said that passing on techniques that have helped U.S. forces throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom will assist the ISF long after American troops have departed, and with a greater comprehension of route clearance procedures, IA engineers can help clear the path toward a safer future for the people of Iraq.

Longest serving brigade in Army chooses Veterans Day for patch ceremony

1st Infantry Division

By Spc. Kandi Huggins
1st AATF Public Affairs
1st Inf. Div., USD-N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918, an armistice between the Allied nations and Germany took effect, officially ending what was then called “the war to end all wars.”

At 11 a.m. on Nov. 11, 2010,

92 years later, as American veterans were honored across the U.S., “Defiant” Soldiers of the 1st Special Troops Battalion of the “Devil Brigade,” 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division from Fort Riley, Kan., conducted a patch ceremony at Contingency Operating Site Warrior in recognition of their own unit’s service across U.S. Division-North in support of Operation New Dawn.

“I feel proud and honored to receive my combat patch on Veterans Day,” said Sgt. Ameen Odat, a military policeman, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st STB.

“This is a very honorable day to receive the ‘Big Red One’ on my right shoulder which signifies my pride in my unit, myself and my country,” said Odat, referring to the Big Red One insignia patch, a red numeral one inside a shield.

During World War I, American Soldiers adopted insignia patches on the left shoulder to identify their respective units and signify their participation in the fight to protect freedom. Later in the 20th Century, the Army authorized the wear of a patch on the right shoulder symbolizing a unit’s participation in battle, confirming a Soldier’s status as a combat veteran.

The Soldiers of Devil Brigade, the oldest continually serving brigade in the Army, commemorated the historic aspect of the day as they donned

the distinctive 1st Inf. Div. combat patch.

Just as Veterans Day became a symbol of the day that ended the “war to end all wars,” Operation New Dawn officially put an end to the focus on combat operations for American forces in Iraq and transitioned to an advise, train and assist role with the Iraqi Security Forces.

The 101st Brigade Support Battalion, “Guardians,” followed 1st STB with a patch ceremony on Nov. 12, becoming the second unit within the Devil Brigade to conduct their combat patch ceremony in theater. Other units of the Devil Brigade will conduct their patch ceremonies in the upcoming week.

“We are at a time and place that history will be made,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Adams, the senior enlisted leader of the Guardians. “Each day we find a way to assist and advise the Iraqi Security Forces. This is history itself.”

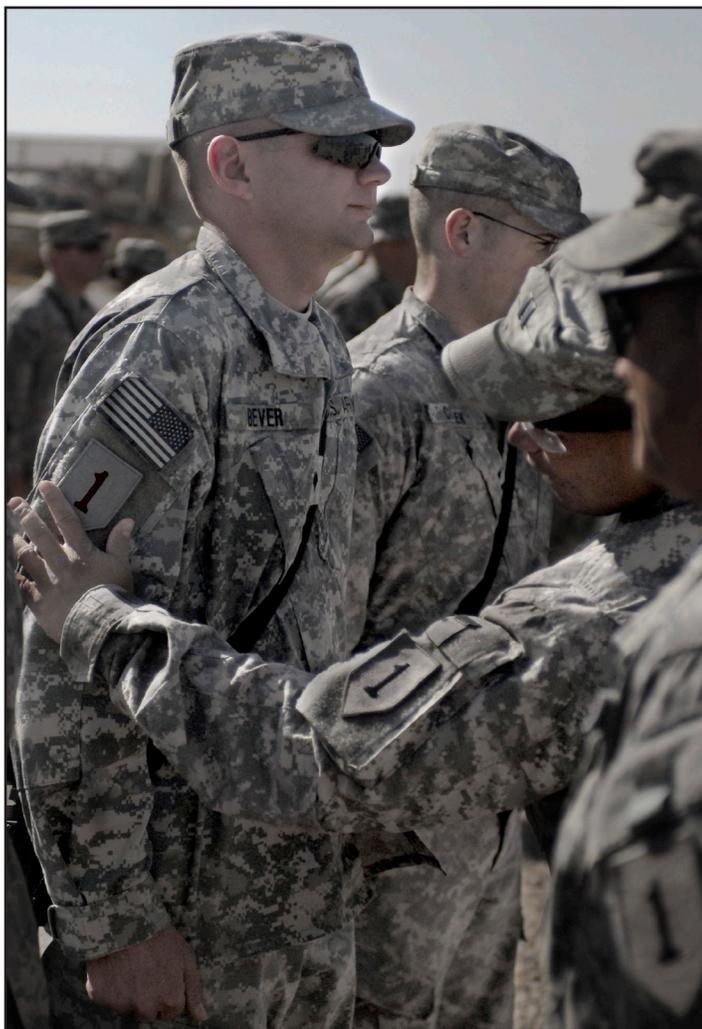


Photo by Spc. Kandi Huggins, 1st AATF PAO, 1st Inf. Div., USD-N

“Defiant” Soldiers of 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, from Fort Riley, Kan., receive the 1st Inf. Div. “Big Red One” combat patch during a patch ceremony, Nov. 11, 2010 at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq. Soldiers received their patches on Veterans Day, commemorating the service of the 1st Brigade Combat Team as the oldest continually serving brigade in the U.S. Army.



Photo by Spc. Kandi Huggins, 1st AATF PAO, 1st Inf. Div., USD-N

The “Guardians” of Company A, 101st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, from Fort Riley, Kan., hold their combat patch ceremony at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Nov. 11, 2010. Soldiers received the patches after 30 days of service in U.S. Division-North in support of Operation New Dawn.

‘Head Hunters’ assist Iraqi policemen

By Spc. Terence Ewings
4th AAB Public Affairs
1st Cav. Div., USD-N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE MAREZ, Iraq — Soldiers of Troop C, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, conducted a training session with the 6th Iraqi Emergency Response Brigade, Nov. 13.

The Emergency Response Brigade, a tactical law enforcement unit that operates under the authority of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, is trained to perform challenging missions and security operations for the country.

The Troop C cavalry scouts deployed to U.S. Division-North in support of Operation

New Dawn, provided training for the IPs at the request of the ERB commander.

“I feel very good about the training and (partnership) we have with the U.S. Soldiers,” said Col. Abdul Jabar Mohamed, commander, 6th Iraqi ERB. “They cooperate with us, and provide logistics and support.”

The ERB commander said he requested U.S. Soldiers train his police officers on first aid and criminal investigative classes because he believes their expertise will add to the IP’s skills and abilities.

“These guys are receptive in the class and get fully involved in participating with U.S. troops,” said Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Harvey, platoon sergeant, Troop C, 1st Sqdn.,



Photo by Spc. Terence Ewings, 4th AAB PAO, 1st Cav. Div., USD-N

Sgt. David Nimrod, a cavalry scout assigned to Troop C, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, teaches Iraqi policemen with 6th Iraqi Police Emergency Response Brigade how to search a building and collect evidence during the lecture portion of a sensitive site exploitation class Nov. 13. Nimrod, a native of Kansas City, Mo., will assist in teaching and refining the ERB policemen’s skills during his tour to U.S. Division-North in support of Operation New Dawn.

9th Cav. Regt.

Head Hunters mentored their partners during the in-class lectures and hands-on exercises, making sure each individual policeman understood the basic objectives.

Harvey, who hails from

Phoenix, said the unit’s goal is to train the Iraqis so they can pass on their knowledge to the rest of the police force.

“The majority of our Soldiers have already deployed to Iraq and are transitioning from working side-by-side with the Iraqis to teaching them so they can be knowledgeable enough to train their own guys,” said Harvey.

Sgt. Jonathan Black, the platoon’s combat medic, taught the Iraqis basic combat casualty care during the first aid class, followed by Sgt. David Nimrod, a cavalry scout, who instructed the policemen on evidence collection and how to properly search a building in the sensitive site exploitation class.

Black said working with the Iraqi police has helped solidified the Iraqi’s trust in the American Soldiers, making them more receptive to instruction and stronger as a whole.

The Head Hunter troops will provide a variety of classes to their Iraqi partners and continue to visit the Emergency Response Brigade to enhance the policemen’s skills during the next year.



Photo by Spc. Terence Ewings, 4th AAB PAO, 1st Cav. Div., USD-N

Sgt. Jonathan Black, a combat medic assigned to Troop C, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, teaches an Iraqi policeman with the 6th Emergency Response Brigade the proper way to use a combat application tourniquet during the practical exercise portion of a combat lifesaver class Nov. 13. Black, a native of Memphis, Tenn., will assist in teaching and refining the ERB policemen’s skills during his tour in support of U.S. Division-North and Operation New Dawn.

★★★★ LIVING THE DREAM ★★★★★

Phil Vandel Band brings 'Music and Magic' to honor troops

By Spc. Kandi Huggins
1st AATF Public Affairs
1st Inf. Div., USD-N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – The Phil Vandel Band closed out a tour of Iraq with a show at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq Nov. 14.

As if two trips to Iraq were not enough, the last one having been in May of 2010, the show concluded the band's third tour to entertain troops deployed to Iraq. Only this time, they brought a little more magic to the stage.

The ensemble, natives of St. Joseph, Mo., brought first time guest B.J. Talley, a magician and hypnotist, also from St. Joseph, Mo., to round out the "Music and Magic Tour."

"Phil has been here three times and this time he threw in the idea to do a music and magic tour," said Talley. "He called me up and he said 'I want to share some of this passion with you. I want you to experience this too because it's really life changing'. He asked me to come along and do the magic part of it and it is life changing and totally unbelievable."

The band performed songs spanning multiple genres while Talley preformed magic tricks and made the audience laugh at his efforts to get out of a straight-jacket.

Each member of the band stepped up to the mic to pay their own respects and trib-

ute to the men and women who are currently deployed, with one of the notable performances being a song titled "What Soldiers Do."

"The song brought tears and it is true," said Staff Sgt. Christy Hawkins, brigade career counselor, 1st Advise and As-

ist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, from Fort Riley, Kan. "It is a great morale booster... It helps us to realize people have not forgotten about us. Even though we have drawn down, we're still here."

Vandel said he wrote the song about the hard work and dedication of servicemembers and their love for their country.

"So many people take things for granted," Vandel said. "I can wake up every morning and hug and kiss my daughter, climb in bed beside her and tell her how much I love her, and it is 12 months for a lot of you that you do not get to see your mom or dad, family, or children and it is so awful but I am so grateful. You all are sticking this through, so me and everybody else at home can do that. You make the ultimate sacrifice."

The Phil Vandel band is scheduled to return to Iraq for a fourth tour in Aug. 2011.



Photo by Spc. Kandi Huggins, 1st AAB Public Affairs, 1st Inf. Div., USD-N

Phil Vandel, Brian Herr and David George of the Phil Vandel Band, perform at the Wagon Wheel on Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq, Nov. 14. Being their last stop on the "Music and Magic Tour," members of the band went all out, performing solo acts as their way of honoring the men and women who are serving their country. "It's less about me and more about you guys and what you're doing," said Joe Brooks, keyboardist, before he performed for the audience.

"So many people take things for granted... but I am so grateful."

—Phil Vandel



Until Every One Comes Home.®

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Annual forum gives Army Families a voice 'Your Family, your issues; heard'

By Kerstin Lopez
Mountaineer Staff

FORT CARSON, Colo. – The Mountain Post community gathered at the annual Army Family Action Plan forum Nov. 3-5 to identify issues and explore resolutions to initiate changes.

The AFAP is a quality of life forum from the people of the Army to the Army leadership.

AFAP has provoked change for 28 years, and is a process that lets Soldiers and Families say what is working, what is not, and what they think will fix it, said Nancy Montville, Army Community Service Family Enrichment Program manager.

The forum alerts commanders and Army leaders to areas of concern and

gives them the opportunity to quickly put plans into place which work toward resolving the issues, Montville said.

It also gives commanders a gauge to validate concerns, measure satisfaction, enhance the Army's corporate image and helps retain the best results in legislation, policies, programs and services that strengthen readiness, retention and safeguards as well, she said.

Sgt. A.J. Coleman, Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers representative for 32nd Transportation Company, 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 43rd Sustainment Brigade, said he wanted to participate in the forum so he could have a chance to speak out on issues he thought

could and should be changed.

"Across the Army there's probably a lot of issues as far as Family and Soldier issues, and I think if people don't voice their opinions on things they want to see changed, then pretty much a lot of things will stay the same and pretty much people would just deal with things the way they are," Coleman said.

Mac Kemp, directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, commended the work groups for their dedication and effort during the AFAP forum.

"I've been a part of the AFAP process since its beginning ... and this has been an absolutely extraordinary effort," Kemp said. "I walked around the groups and listened to the way

business was being conducted; I listened to our delegates and the way they communicated with each other, and it has been absolutely magnificent."

"That's a sign of a great group of delegates and a sign of a process that's matured and very effective. The other thing I like about this process is that every year it serves as a reminder of the way we ought to do business with our community," Kemp said.

Each delegate was assigned to a work group to discuss issues such as Family support, health services, force support, consumer affairs and benefits and entitlements.

The groups collectively prioritized the top three issues within each category and presented them during the out-brief Nov. 5.

Montville said the issues that can be changed at the Fort Carson level would be discussed quarterly and those that required a regulation change or higher level attention would go to the Forces Command-level and then to the Department of the Army for review.

"The best ideas we get come from you ... and this installation is going to owe you a lot because of what you've done," Kemp said to the forum delegates.



Photo by Kerstin Lopez, Mountaineer Staff

The Health Services Workgroup put on a short skit for the Army Family Action Plan forum audience, Nov. 5, to demonstrate the issues service members and their Families are encountering at Fort Carson.



Hey Doc: ‘Deployment blues or something else?’

Hey Doc: “This is my third deployment and my wife and I are on the rocks. Our daughter started acting out in her first grade class. Since I arrived, I’ve been short with people and my subordinates get on my nerves at the drop of a hat. I’m feeling unsatisfied with my job and just want to work things out with my family. To make things worse, it takes me three hours to finally get to sleep and then I keep waking up. I’m tired and angry all day. Is there a medication to help me out?”

– Irritable in Iraq



Dear Irritable: it is not surprising that you are short-tempered, having problems with sleep, and feeling unmotivated at work. Under the circumstances – distance from Family in turmoil, restless sleep, multiple deployments – these are normal responses to abnormal conditions. Short-term sleep medication may improve irritability and energy levels. However, even common sleep aides have side effects and risks, which are magnified during deployment.

When deciding if you require a behavioral health medication, the first step is to find the cause of your symptoms. If you can put your finger on a specific stressor, try to tackle it. It could be relationship issues, work stress, financial issues, or other issues causing your condition. Medication may not be the best treatment.

Remember the acronym “**HALT.**”

Hungry	Angry	Lonely	Tired
Choose a balanced diet	Burn off negative energy	Talk with friends	Consistent sleep schedule
<p>Remember the four basic food groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Dairy, meat, grain, and fruits and vegetables. <p>Don’t skip breakfast!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Skipping breakfast is the equivalent of waiting up to triple the normal time between meals! –Your brain will run low on fuel, making you tired and irritable. 	<p>Using or refocusing energy created by anger forces a biological release. Try some of the following strategies to jump-start your ‘cool-down’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Exercise –Talk with someone. –Write –Listen to music while performing any of the above techniques or another task. 	<p>Stressors are usually repeat circumstances. Therefore, it is important that you find a long term solution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Talk to friends. You see them on a regular basis and they can often empathize with your situation. –Talk with a superior. They may be able to find a solution to a problem or point you to someone who can. –Talk to a Chaplain or other specialist who has training you may find helpful. 	<p>Although there is no definite amount of sleep for every individual, the average adult requires between six and ten hours of sleep.</p> <p>Get on a sleep schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –An inconsistent sleep schedule will make it harder to fall asleep when you do find your way to bed. –Your body actually sleeps based on the number of hours you are awake, not how many hours of sleep you require.

By remembering to take care of these basic human needs, you can reduce stress while adjusting to the deployment. Get into a daily routine that includes a balanced diet, exercising and burning off negative energy, talking to your friends about what is going on, religious fellowship, and sleeping on a schedule. Go to bed at the same time each night, avoid excessive or late-in-the-day caffeine, and wake up at about the same time each morning.

If your symptoms come out of nowhere, are not associated with a stressor, severely affect your day-to-day living, or you are heavy with depression or loss of enjoyment, then you should talk to someone with the tools to help you through this rut. This can be a Chaplain, your unit medical personnel, or Combat Stress Control.

As an American serving your country in a challenging environment, you owe it to yourself and Family to address your physical or emotional pain. There are well-trained specialists here to assist you and get you back in the fight at full strength.

Taskforce Ironhorse, keep those questions coming!

– Maj. Samuel Preston
Taskforce Ironhorse Psychiatrist