

THE *Iron* LEAF

Special Christmas Edition!
U.S. DIVISION-NORTH



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ESTABLISHED IN 1917 TO HONOR THOSE WHO SERVE



DECEMBER 25, 2010

Texas school teachers donate supplies to Rugaybat Elementary students

Pvt. Alyxandra McChesney
1st AATF Public Affairs
1st Inf. Div., USD-N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – Megan Campbell, a teacher at Park Wood Elementary School in Houston, and wife to 1st Lt. Dan Campbell, platoon leader, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, rounded up teachers and staff from the Texas elementary school to donate school supplies, candy and food for the students of Rugaybat Elementary in Kirkuk, Iraq Dec. 14.

“Thunderhorse” Soldiers from 2nd Bn., 12th Cavalry Regt., 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, attached to the 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, from Fort Riley, Kan., worked with Iraqi Security Forces to distribute the gifts from Park Wood Elementary School.

Campbell said he discussed the idea of helping the local school in Rugaybat with his wife, Megan, after the Thanksgiving holiday.

Thinking ahead to Christmas, the Campbell Family agreed they could do something special for the children in the local village of Rugaybat.

Campbell said Megan, enthused about the idea, began plans to create an informal



U.S. Army Photo by Pvt. Alyxandra McChesney, 1st AATF PAO, 1st Inf. Div., USD-N
Students at Rugaybat Elementary School in Kirkuk, Iraq stand in line awaiting a turn to receive a goodie bag filled with school supplies and candy from Mohammad Showcat Izzat, the senior Iraqi noncommissioned officer from Iraqi Police’s Emergency Security Unit for Kirkuk province, and an Iraqi Security Forces soldier costumed as the “Lion of Kirkuk,” Dec. 14, 2010. Faculty of Park Wood Elementary School, from Houston, collected the supplies for ISF to donate to the children and families of the Rugaybat community. “Thunderhorse” Soldiers of Company A, 2nd Bn., 12th Cavalry Regt., 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, attached to the 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, from Fort Riley, Kan., assisted the Iraqi Security Forces as they distributed the gifts in support of Operation New Dawn.

“adopt-a-school” program to build a relationship between the two schools, even if they were thousands of miles apart and from different cultures.

The Campbell’s worked together, corresponding by e-mail about the informal project, and planned to bring local ISF into the effort.

Campbell worked closely

with his ISF partner unit, the Iraqi Police’s Emergency Services Unit of the Kirkuk province, who took the lead in planning the distribution of the donated supplies to the Iraqi school.

“The village was very receptive of the gifts we brought them,” said Campbell, who hails from Fort Worth, Texas.

Campbell said he believes events like the school supply distribution helps the Iraqi people feel confident about ISF taking the lead for security operations in Iraq.

“Doing this has really helped build a strong bond between the ISF and Rugaybat,”

See **TEACHERS**, pg. 4 —

WARRIOR

LONGKNIFE

DEVIL

FIT FOR ANY TEST

IRONHORSE

STEADFAST AND LOYAL

STEADFAST AND LOYAL

IRONHORSE

FIT FOR ANY TEST

DEVIL

LONGKNIFE

WARRIOR



IRONHORSE STRONG: Soldier of the Week

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Matt Bernhardt, a Basking Ridge, N.J.-native, assigned to Company 1, Mobile Unit 6, Joint Task Force Troy, U.S. Division-North, earned recognition as the "Ironhorse Strong Soldier" for the Week of Dec. 18, due to his outstanding performance as an explosive ordnance disposal technician in northern Iraq.

Lt. Andrew Hendricks, Commander, Company 1, Mobile Unit 6, said he recommended Bernhardt because even as the most junior team leader in his unit he is a dependable and valued asset to his unit.

"He is a guy that I have full faith and confidence in," said Hendricks. "When a call comes in, be it an Improvised Explosive Device or a planned disposal operation with Iraqi Security Forces EOD, I know Petty Officer 2nd Class Bernhardt is going to make sound

decisions and ensure the safety of all personnel present."

Since his arrival in the Salah ad Din Province, Bernhardt disabled one IED, conducted one IED post blast analysis and conducted five Explosive Remnants of war turn-in operations with Iraqi EOD elements resulting in the destruction of 182 ordnance items totaling 1,460 pounds of net explosive weight.

Bernhardt also provided 100 hours of training to Iraqi EOD, teaching them skills necessary to effectively maintain security operations unaided by U.S. Forces.

"The largest lesson that other service members can learn from Petty Officer 2nd class Bernhardt is that there are always solutions to a problem," said Hendricks. "Even though the problem you are facing isn't textbook or exactly what you saw during your work up cycle, if you step back



U.S. Army photo

U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Matt Bernhardt, an explosive ordnance disposal technician from Basking Ridge, N.J., assigned to Company 1, Mobile Unit 6, Joint Task Force Troy, U.S. Division-North, is the "Ironhorse Strong Soldier" for the Week of Dec. 18, 2010. Lt. Andrew Hendricks, commander, Company 1, Mobile Unit 6 said Bernhardt earned recognition through outstanding performance during the unit's deployment to northern Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn.

and move through the problem one methodical step at a time you will be able to solve it. If that doesn't work then just put

a lot of explosives on it and make it go away."

SOLDIERS DELIVER 'GIVING SPIRIT'	ARMY'S TOP OFFICER VISITS TROOPS AT COB SPEICHER FOR THE HOLIDAYS	LONG KNIFE TROOPERS TEACH IRAQI ARMY COMMANDOS AT JFSTC IN NORTHERN IRAQ	SON CONTINUES FATHER'S MILITARY LEGACY
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THE IVY LEAF

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Command Sergeant Major – Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel A. Dailey

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The Ivy Leaf Layout & Design – Spc. Thomas Bixler

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

Searching for the meaning of Christmas

The Gospel of Luke explains the birth of Christ

Merry Christmas

Chaplain Maj. Ken Hurst
Deputy Chaplain
U.S. Division-North

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – We fondly remember the scene from “A Charlie Brown Christmas,” adapted for television by “Peanuts” creator Charles M. Schulz.

In the 1965 classic, Charlie Brown despairingly questioned the true meaning of Christmas after failing to find a Christmas tree for his school Nativity play.

Taking center stage, Charlie Brown’s friend, Linus, quoted the second chapter of the King James Version of the Gospel according to Luke 2:8-14:

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, ‘Fear not: for behold, I bring unto you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.’”

Upon reciting the scripture, Linus concluded, “That is what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown.”

It is an incredible honor to be amidst the great Ironhorse Soldiers during this season of reflection. Many of our troops could easily answer Charlie Brown’s inquiry with equal precision. The meaning of Christmas is displayed boldly for us in the pages of Sacred Scripture as Linus so clearly quoted.

Traditions across Christendom spend the four Sundays before Christmas exam-



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Andrew Ingram, USD-N PAO

Maj. Ken Hurst, deputy division chaplain, 4th Infantry Division and U.S. Division-North, leads a weekly Bible study composed of Soldiers and civilians, deployed to Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, in support of Operation New Dawn, Dec. 22. During the session, Hurst led the group through the story of the birth of Christ in preparation for Christmas later that week.

ining the coming of the Christ child into the world. Themes such as hope, peace, love and joy display the grandeur of the work of God in sending His beloved Son into our world.

Hope is the confident assurance that God keeps His promises. The angelic proclamation of the Son’s birth in “the City of David” told the shepherds that God was doing exactly as the ancient prophets foretold.

Peace speaks of the end result of the Christ child’s life, peace between God and man because of a Savior.

Love describes the divine motive behind this unique historical event. It must surely remind us to love the un-lovely and reach out to our neighbor. But it first begins in the heart of our loving heavenly Father who, in eternity past and out of pure mercy, prepared the plan to send the Christ, and seeing the majesty of such a birth and the immense life about to be lived, the angels led in singing of the good tidings of great

joy. It is such an unsurpassable joy that the angels can only say, “Glory to God in the highest!”

These would only be religious sentiments if not for one certain thing. The Gospel writer, Luke, whom Linus quoted, is writing about history. He is writing about events that actually occurred and could be verified.

The second chapter of Luke’s Gospel contains several historical markers that allowed the readers of the first century to test the authenticity of the birth of Christ.

Hope, peace, love and joy are rooted in real events that changed the course of the world. We are different today because of Christmas 2,000 years ago.

The meaning of Christmas must challenge us daily to trust the God who kept His promises by providing the Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Soldiers deliver 'giving spirit'

Continued from
TEACHERS, pg. 1

1st Cavalry Division

Staff Sgt. Renee Wilson
4th AAB Public Affairs
1st Cav. Div., USD-N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE MAREZ, Iraq – With Christmas approaching, Chaplains and Soldiers thought not of themselves, but what they could do for others.

Soldiers assigned to the 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, from Fort Hood, Texas, handed out backpacks filled with teddy bears, toy cars, soccer balls and school supplies, surprising orphans at the Church of Mar Youhanna, or Saint John, in the town of Qara Qosh, Iraq, Dec. 17.

Soldiers of the U.S. Army Reserve 412th Civil Affairs Battalion, from Columbus, Ohio, provided the toys and school supplies to put a smile on the displaced children's faces.

"Life is hard enough as an orphan, so it was great to give them something to make their day and Christmas Season brighter," said Sgt. Greg MacKinnon, a civil affairs non-commissioned officer, assigned to the 412th CA Bn., attached to the 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div.

Many of the Soldiers who helped with the event said they felt the humanitarian assistance was a good way to spread Christmas spirit.

Sgt. 1st Class Demetrius Smith, equal opportunity advisor assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div., said the opportunity was a new experience for him, compared to previous deployments to Iraq.

"I've been deployed five times now, and I had the opportunity to work with kids last time," said Smith, who hails from Philadelphia. "This time it was different being able to help



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Renee Wilson, 4th AAB PAO, 1st Cav. Div. Maj. Michael Patterson, senior chaplain assigned to 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, dressed as Iraq's Baba Noel, known more commonly in the United States as Santa Claus, gives a doll to a young Iraqi girl during a religious leader engagement at the Church of Mar Youhanna, or Saint John, in the town of Qara Qosh, Dec. 14, 2010.

in a non-combatant (role), and I appreciated the opportunity."

The 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div. assumed its mission in October, deploying to northern Iraq as part of U.S. Division-North in support of Operation New Dawn, to advise, mentor, train and equip Iraqi Security Forces.

Keeping with the Christmas spirit, a chaplain wearing a Santa suit passed out presents to more than 150 children gathered at the Iraqi Christian church in northern Iraq.

Maj. Michael Patterson, senior chaplain of the 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div., said he wanted to bring the Christmas spirit to the children and congregation of the Iraqi Christian church.

Patterson used a visit with

religious leaders of the church as an opportunity to distribute the Christmas cheer.

"(The church) had the Santa suit for me," said Patterson, a native of Vero Beach, Fla. "It was fun to see the joy in the children's faces when they saw Santa."

Maj. Patricia Peeler, personnel actions officer assigned to 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div., said the event, bringing joy to the Iraqi children, lifted her spirits, especially during this time away from Family.

"Even if they could for one moment forget about their troubles and it brings them joy, we completed what we wanted to do," said Peeler, who calls Marion, N.Y. home.

said Campbell.

Bringing school supplies, candy and food, the Iraqi Police met with the students and their families. Visiting with the children, one of the Iraqi soldiers donned the "Golden Lion" costume, the official mascot for the IP ESU for the Kirkuk province. The lion helped the students relax and brought giggles and smiles to their faces.

"By doing this it encourages the students to want to come to school, and it encourages them to want to get better grades," said Sawsan al Wahld, principal of Rugaybat Elementary. "Seeing the kids with smiles on their faces makes the families and me very happy."

The senior Iraqi non-commissioned officer from the Iraqi Police ESU for Kirkuk province, Mohammad Showcat Izzat said the Rugaybat Elementary school children were happy to receive the needed school supplies.

Mohammad said he felt if he can help supply the local villages with supplies to help the children to study and learn, it will make the citizens of Rugaybat happy and help Kirkuk become a better city as a whole.

Campbell said the event proved beneficial to everyone involved.

"I really think this made a difference," the platoon leader said. "My wife is excited that this worked out, and I'm hoping that the kids back at Park Wood Elementary will get to see some of the pictures from this and know that they also made a difference very far away."

The 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div. is deployed to northern Iraq as part of U.S. Division-North to advise, train and mentor ISF in support of Operation New Dawn.

Iraqi and American explosive ordnance disposal teams work together to keep Kirkuk province safe

1st Infantry Division

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

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – A combined Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army ordnance disposal team conducted a controlled detonation to destroy captured explosives at a demolition range outside of Contingency Operating Site Warrior Dec. 11.

Soldiers of the U.S. Army's 47th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), from Fort Hood, Texas, working with U.S. Air Force Airmen from 321st EOD Flight, 321st Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron, 321st Air Expeditionary Wing, from Sather Air Base, Iraq, trained and assisted the Iraqi Security Forces in preparation for the detonation.

"The purpose was to demonstrate to the Iraqi EOD team the proper way to dispose of these captured munitions," said Air Force Tech. Sgt. Wayson Leaverton, a disposal technician with the 99th Civil Engineer Squadron, from Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas, attached to the 321st EOSS.

The Iraqi EOD teams are composed of members of the Iraqi Police Counter Explosive Team, Iraqi Army Bomb Disposal Companies, Iraqi Police Unexploded Ordnance Team and Kirkuk Fire Department.

Working together, the combined Iraqi and U.S. EOD teams transported a stockpile of munitions to a demolitions range at COS Warrior, stacking and countercharging the ordnance with C-4 plastic explosives.

After conducting final safety and readiness checks, the EOD technicians detonated



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kandi Huggins, 1st AATF PAO, 1st Inf. Div., USD-N

Senior Airman Maria Dedominicis, a U.S. Air Force explosive ordnance disposal technician with the 321st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight, 321st Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron, attached to the Army's 47th Ordnance Company (EOD), from Fort Hood, Texas, fills an empty rocket shell with C-4 plastic explosives at a demolition range located outside of Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq Dec. 11, 2010. The U.S. forces' EOD teams trained the Iraqi counter explosives unit, composed of Iraqi Police and firemen, on the proper means to dispose of unexploded ordnance Iraqi Security Forces captured from violent extremists. The U.S. forces' EOD Soldiers are deployed to Iraq as part of the 1st Advise and Assist Task Force in support of Operation New Dawn.

the explosives, destroying the captured munitions. As a final check, the EOD teams searched the surrounding area to ensure there was no unexploded ord-

nance left behind.

The destroyed ordnance consisted of material captured from violent extremist networks by the Iraqi Security

Forces in Kirkuk province.

The combined EOD teams destroyed artillery projectiles,

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Kirkuk's leaders work together to build a sustainable arbitration mechanism

Maj. John Mini
1st AATF Public Affairs
1st Inf. Div., USD-N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – Leaders in Kirkuk are building a lasting system to formally resolve disputes and provide better security for the citizens of Kirkuk province following a preliminary security council meeting at Contingency Operating Site Warrior Dec. 7.

The goal of an Iraqi-led provincial security council is to build a collective process that allows the Iraqi government and its partnered security elements to work together in deciding the best way to secure Kirkuk, said Col. Eric Welsh, commander of 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division.

Kirkuk's Arab, Kurd and Turkmen leaders agreed a provincial security council would be one step toward better security and stability in their province.

During the weeks leading up to the preliminary meeting, Welsh engaged key leaders in Kirkuk province, encouraging the provincial leaders to develop and participate in an independent and sustainable arbitration process.

"Governance and security go hand-in-hand," said Welsh, explaining the importance of a sustainable, legally binding system to make decisions that benefit Iraqis.

"There is no single answer for Kirkuk and its future—the answer is not U.S. forces staying here, but the answer is about a way to develop an enduring strategic partnership with the government of Iraq," he added.

Welsh said a partnered ISF, working together toward com-



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kandi Huggins, 1st AATF PAO, 1st Inf. Div., USD-N
Col. Eric Welsh, commander of the "Devil" Brigade, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, from Fort Riley, Kan., met with Kirkuk's decision makers during a preparatory meeting to develop a plan for monthly provincial security council meetings at Contingency Operating Site Warrior Dec. 7, 2010. The group discussed the way forward for creating a sustainable arbitration mechanism to oversee future security efforts that will require the cooperation of Kurdish Security Forces, the Iraqi Army, and the Iraqi Police. "People must come to the table and be willing to talk about problems and possible solutions," said Welsh, "and today's meeting was an important step forward in that process."

mon goals, will help to make the Kirkuk province and surrounding areas safer for future generations of Iraqis.

Local ISF leaders agreed provincial security council meetings are an important step toward the greater long-term stability in Kirkuk.

Maj. Gen. Sameer, commander of 12th Iraqi Army Division and Provincial Director of Police Maj. Gen. Jamal agreed to serve as members of the security council and assist in a fair and legal system for resolving issues between local leaders.

Kirkuk's major ethnic blocks have not always agreed on how to secure the city, Sameer and Jamal said, but a Kirkuk Provincial Security Council will provide a forum for decision makers to figure out solutions and work together toward the same goals.

According to local leaders the real issue is about security, not who provides the security—an important indicator of the potential for greater unity within the ethnically diverse city.

"If the council were to convene many people would be able to air out their grievances in a public and professional forum," said Welsh.

"It's okay to disagree," he said. "There may be many disagreements in the meeting, but as long as every member of the meeting has the interest of the people they represent then the outcome will be better security for Kirkuk."

The preliminary security council meeting confirmed the potential for the people of Kirkuk to develop their own system for an arbitration mechanism.

Welsh helped to organize

the meeting which brought together key leaders from across Kirkuk province. The leaders discussed future plans for security and agreed to convene again to have a more detailed discussion.

Eventually, the process will be a formal bi-monthly security council meeting orchestrated entirely by the Kirkuk's key decision makers.

"People must come to the table and be willing to talk about problems and possible solutions," explained Welsh, "and today's meeting was an important step forward in that process."

Welsh said he is confident Kirkuk's leaders will create an enduring and formal system to arbitrate security and other important areas such as economics, infrastructure, and governance.

A little touch of home for the Holiday Season

Christmas trees bring touch of holiday spirit to deployed troops

25th Infantry Division

Staff Sgt. Ricardo Branch
2nd AAB Public Affairs, 25th Inf. Div.,
U.S. Division-North

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARHORSE, Iraq – A fresh, aromatic pine tree stands tall, its branches draped with garlands and Christmas ornaments, greeting Soldiers entering the 225th Brigade Support Battalion Headquarters building at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq with holiday festivity and cheer.

A real Christmas tree, complete with holiday decorations, brought holiday cheer to Soldiers of 225th BSB, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, deployed to the Diyala province of northern Iraq.

“The Christmas tree is a nice morale booster for Soldiers,” said Staff Sgt. Carlo

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grenades, assorted projectile fuses, improvised explosive devices, landmines, and an AK-47 rifle.

The destruction of this material represents a step forward in providing security for the Kirkuk province and a setback for violent extremist networks, who would otherwise use the munitions to conduct attacks, said 1st Lt. Ed Song, platoon leader, 47th Ord. Company (EOD).

“The purpose today was to teach the Iraqi EOD team how to properly dispose of explosives,” added Song. “We show them how to do it safely and in a way that will minimize hazards.”

The ISF EOD units have performed admirably during the past four years, Leaverton said.

The Iraqis continue training with the U.S. EOD teams to remain proficient at their skills and improve capabilities, he



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kandi Huggins, 1st AATF PAO, 1st Inf. Div.

Iraqi explosive ordnance disposal personnel stack munitions at a demolitions range outside Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq Dec. 11, 2010. Soldiers of the U.S. Army's 47th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), from Fort Hood, Texas, working with U.S. Air Force Airmen from 321st EOD Flight, 321st Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron, 321st Air Expeditionary Wing, from Sather Air Base, Iraq, trained and assisted the Iraqi Security Forces in preparation for the detonation of ordnance.

explained.

Working with U.S. forces counterparts, the EOD personnel train four days per week,

learning large-scale demolitions, how to recognize unexploded ordnances, how to use protective bomb suits, and em-



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Ricardo Branch, 2nd AAB Public Affairs, 25th Inf. Div., USD-N
1st Lt. Janelle Jones, a quartermaster officer assigned to 225th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, places a present beneath the Christmas tree in the battalion headquarters at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq Dec. 15, 2010.

ploy robotic and remote counter Improvised Explosive Device procedures.

The practical application of their learning includes the destruction of captured explosives, added Leaverton.

“This demonstration and the training the Iraqi EOD receive from us is vital to the future success of the Iraqi EOD program and counter IED operations,” he said. “As we draw down more and more, the responsibilities will fall on the local Iraqi EOD teams ... and it will be part of their mission to collect, store and safely destroy unserviceable munitions in order to minimize hazard to the life and property of their people ...”

Both the 47th and 321st EOD teams are deployed to Iraq as part of the 1st Advise and Assist Task Force from Fort Riley, Kan., deployed to U.S. Division-North in support of Operation New Dawn.

Army's top officer visits troops at COB Speicher for the holidays

Happy Holidays



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Strayer, 109th MPAD, USD-N PAO

U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., addresses Soldiers of Task Force Ironhorse, U.S. Division-North at the north Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Center-North located at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Dec. 24, 2010. Casey led a reenlistment and reaffirmation ceremony administering the Oath of Enlistment to 66 Soldiers from Task Force Ironhorse. Task Force Ironhorse is comprised of service members of 4th Inf. Div.; 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division; 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division; 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division; Task Force ODIN (Observe, Detect, Identify, Neutralize); 103rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command and supporting units. Casey addressed the Soldiers deployed to U.S. Division-North acknowledging their continuing mission deployed in support of Operation New Dawn and offering his gratitude for their service.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Strayer, 109th MPAD, USD-N PAO

U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., applauds Soldiers of Task Force Ironhorse, U.S. Division-North Soldiers immediately following the oath of reenlistment and reaffirmation was given at the north Moral, Welfare, and Recreation center at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Dec. 24, 2010. Casey reenlisted 66 Soldiers from 4th Infantry Division; 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division; 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division; 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division; Task Force ODIN (Observe, Detect, Identify, Neutralize) 103rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command, during a Christmas Eve reenlistment and reaffirmation ceremony.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, USD-N PAO

U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., presents a coin to Spc. James Curtis, information technology specialist assigned to Company C, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, during a special coining ceremony for Soldiers serving with U.S. Division-North, deployed in support of Operation New Dawn, Dec. 24, 2010. The Army's top ranking officer visited with Soldiers of Task Force Ironhorse, serving at COB Speicher, Christmas Eve, to thank the men and women in uniform for their service to the nation, especially during the Holiday Season. Curtis, who hails from Pasadena, Md., said it feels good to be individually recognized amongst the hard-working Soldiers of the U.S. Division-North Communications Section, who are responsible for keeping the "Ironhorse" Division Headquarters computers mission capable.

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U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, USD-N PAO
 U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., addresses Soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division, Task Force Ironhorse, during a special visit to northern Iraq, Dec. 24, 2010. Casey presented coins in recognition of outstanding Soldiers and led a mass reenlistment and reaffirmation ceremony for 66 Soldiers serving at COB Speicher during the visit with Soldiers of U.S. Division-North, deployed in support of Operation New Dawn.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Andrew Ingram, USD-N PAO
 U.S. Army Chief of Staff, Gen. George W. Casey, Jr. presents a coin to Sgt. Clyde Skinner III, a forward observer assigned to the Fires Section, Company A, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, during a ceremony at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Dec. 24 2010.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Andrew Ingram, USD-N PAO
 U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., addresses Soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division, at the U.S. Division-North Headquarters Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Dec. 24. Casey visited COB Speicher as part of a tour of U.S. Military installations around the world. "Everywhere I go I see Soldiers making a difference for the Army country," he said. "Here is no different."



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Strayer, 109th MPAD, USD-N PAO
 U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., signs individual reenlistment contracts for Task Force Ironhorse, U.S. Division-North Soldiers at the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Center-North at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Dec. 24, 2010. Casey administered the Oath of Enlistment to 66 U.S. Division-North Soldiers from 4th Infantry Division; 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division; 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division; 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division; Task Force ODIN (Observe, Detect, Identify, Neutralize), 103rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command.

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Principio, a generator mechanic assigned to Company B, 225th BSB, 2nd AAB, 25th Inf. Div.

"It's just amazing to see a real Christmas tree out here," said Principio, a 24 year-old native of Jacksonville, Fla., serving his fourth deployment to Iraq, the third such during the Holiday Season. "It's one of the last things you expect to see over in the desert; the pine smell of it alone reminds me of home."

The battalion Family Readiness Groups mailed the fresh pine tree, 6,235 miles from a tree nursery in Michigan to the Soldiers at FOB Warhorse deployed to U.S. Division-North in northern Iraq.

Tracey Murray, Family Readiness Group advisor and spouse to the deployed battalion commander, helped organize the effort to send Christmas trees to the troops of the brigade support battalion.

"One of our FRG leaders, Sherri De Silva, was here during the last deployment and remembered how they sent live Christmas trees to the troops downrange," said Tracey, who works with the brigade's FRG leaders in Hawaii. "We decided to do it again to bring a bit of Christmas cheer to our Soldiers."

To carry on the holiday tradition, the 225th BSB FRG's contacted a tree nursery in McMillan, Mich., to begin the process of bringing the Christmas spirit to the troops.

The journey to bring the tree, and ten of its brothers to the desert was no simple feat, Tracey said, due to the fact the current deployment scattered the battalion across two provinces in Iraq, an area roughly the size of Pennsylvania.

"The coordination was a little trickier for this deployment," she explained. "The brigade is responsible for a much larger area, and the BSB Soldiers are literally everywhere.

"After we coordinated with Rear Detachment and our deployed Soldiers, each of our FRG companies in Hawaii 'adopted' a FOB and sent a tree to the battalion point of contact there, regardless if it was 'their



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Ricardo Branch, 2nd AAB PAO, 25th Inf.

Spc. Peter Hinz, motor transport operator, Company A, 225th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, fixes a snowflake on top of the battalion Christmas tree in the headquarters building at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq, Dec. 15, 2010. The battalion Family Readiness Groups mailed the fresh pine tree, 6,235 miles from a tree nursery in Michigan to the Soldiers at FOB Warhorse deployed to U.S. Division-North in northern Iraq. Family Readiness Group Advisor Tracey Murray, 225th BSB, 2nd AAB, 25th Inf. Div., from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, helped organize the effort to send Christmas trees to the troops of the brigade support battalion.

Soldier," Tracey said.

Each company FRG leader also sent individual boxes of lights and decorations to their deployed company commanders and adopted bases, providing the trees Christmas flair for the holidays.

"While it is hard for our Families to be without their Soldier during the holidays, we know it must be even harder for the Soldiers downrange," Tracey said. "We hope this brings a little bit of Christmas cheer to every one of our Soldiers."

Lt. Col. Scott Murray, battalion commander, 225th BSB, 2nd AAB, 25th Inf. Div., received the trees arriving at FOB Warhorse.

Murray, whose wife heads the battalion FRG, said he is touched to see the amazing effort of the Families and friends of the battalion taking care of the Soldiers during the holidays.

"It's my view every Soldier who is away from home always thinks about home," Murray said. "Anything you can do that would remind them of that and what it feels

like during Christmas is important because it lets them know people back home are thinking about them."

Murray said seeing holiday decorations arriving from home is also a great morale booster for the troops, because it changes the mood and atmosphere around the workplace.

"A few days ago, I noticed one of my company commanders carrying a large duffel bag," he said. "The flap was open and you could just make out the Christmas tree decorations inside. He was going to the flight line here on Warhorse and flying out to visit multiple remote sites. It's great to see the Soldiers' spirits lifted in such a way by our Families back home."

Although far from home, Soldiers of the 225th BSB received care and love from friends and Family, little reminders provided by the unit's FRGs. These little reminders served to bring a taste of home to the deployed Soldiers during the Holiday Season.

Long Knife troopers teach Iraqi Army commandos at JFSTC in northern Iraq

1st Cavalry Division

Capt. Philip Crabtree
4th AAB Public Affairs
1st Cav. Div., USD-N

JOINT FORCES SECURITY TRAINING CENTER, Iraq – U.S. Army noncommissioned officers assigned to 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, trained Iraqi Army commandos to plan military operations using standardized U.S. and Iraqi military doctrine and orders at the Joint Forces Security Training Center, near Al Kisik, Iraq Dec. 14.

The instructors assigned to Troop B, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div., taught IA sol-

diers of the Commando Battalion, 3rd IA Division, how to write five-paragraph operation orders and concept of operation briefs.

Understanding military mission planning, operations orders and the commander's intent is very important to the successful completion of a mission, said Staff Sgt. Joseph Garcia, who hails from Phoenix.

Deployed with U.S. Division-North in support of Operation New Dawn, the NCOs also taught their Iraqi counterparts how to brief operations

See COMMANDOS, pg. 12



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Philip Crabtree, 4th AAB PAO, 1st Cav. Div. Staff Sgt. Joseph Garcia, a cavalry scout and native of Phoenix, teaches Iraqi soldiers from the Commando Battalion, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, to organize mission planning using a five-paragraph operations order format at the Joint Forces Security Training Center near Al Kisik, Dec. 14, 2010.

394th CSSB hosts Children's Day for Iraqi orphans

Sgt. Coltin Heller
109th MPAD
USD-N Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – Laughter echoed amidst table games and crafts as children from an Iraqi orphanage in Tikrit attended a special day for the Soldiers and orphans hosted by U.S. Division-North at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Dec. 17.

U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers assigned to the 220th Transportation Company, 394th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 103rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command, from Fremont, Neb., also handed out shoes donated by "Let Them Walk in Our Shoes" to the Iraqi children.

The charitable organization from Palmerton, Pa., and surrounding communities, collected approximately 6,300 pairs of shoes, donating and shipping 3,500 pairs of footwear to the 4th Infantry Division to distribute to local Iraqi communities during their deployment in support of Operation

See CHILDREN, pg. 12



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Coltin Heller, 109th MPAD, USD-N PAO

Staff Sgt. Travis Hill, who hails from Fremont, N.H. and the logistics noncommissioned officer in charge, 220th Transportation Company, 394th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 103rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command, helps an Iraqi child try on a new pair of shoes during Children's Day held at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center-North, Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Dec. 17, 2010.

Continued from **COMMANDOS**, pg. 11

orders and create concept of operations plans to synchronize unit actions for missions.

Garcia worked double duty as a cavalry scout section sergeant and instructor at the JFSTC, an Iraqi training facility near Al Kisik, where Iraqi soldiers train at the individual, squad and platoon levels.

"The Iraqis use a similar process when they plan their missions, and their main role is to advise the officers in their unit," explained Sgt. Timothy James, a cavalry scout squad leader assigned to Troop B, 1st Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt.

James, who hails from Sheboygan, Wis., rotated through the JFSTC as an instructor, teaching small unit tactics in addition to his normal duties assisting Iraqi Security Forces in providing security at combined checkpoints.

U.S. forces also use the JFSTC to provide medical aid and evacuation training, rifle marksmanship and tactical training to ISF from Mosul and surrounding areas, he said.

Sgt. 1st Class Reynaldo Gomez, a platoon sergeant with Troop B, also taught the commandos how to conduct defensive operations, a standard task at the platoon level.

"All of the tasks we teach the units who come through the JFSTC are important for building upon skills they already have ..." said Gomez, a resident of Corpus Christi, Texas. "They are learning to plan their own operations and are well on their way to being self-sufficient in securing the people in the area."

The 1st Sqdn., 9th Cav., is working with the Iraqi Army to open a training facility at Contingency Operating Site Marez, where company and battalion-size IA units will train their platoons on tactics and techniques learned at the JFSTC, said James.

The Ghazlani Warrior Training Center will enable these units to maneuver and fire at various training lanes as well as rehearse unit coordination as the ISF in the region becomes solely responsible for security, he explained.

The 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div., is responsible for training units of 3rd and 2nd IA Divisions and the 3rd Federal Police Division, operating in the Ninewa province, said Gomez.

The IA commandos of the 3rd IA Div. are playing an important role in helping the ISF assume responsibility for security operations in northern Iraq, he said.

"The commandos are not a typical type of Iraqi Army unit," said Garcia. "They usually conduct raids against wanted criminals and weapons caches. Something unique about them is that they also target the financial networks used by violent extremists to fund operations against legitimate authority and security forces."

The 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div. deployed to northern Iraq in October as part of U.S. Division-North's mission to advise, assist, mentor and train ISF in support of Operation New Dawn.

"...they also target the financial networks used by violent extremists to fund operations against legitimate authority and security forces."

— Staff Sgt.
Joseph Garcia

Continued from **CHILDREN**, pg. 11

New Dawn.

Sgt. Glenn Shannon, automated logistics noncommissioned officer, assigned to 220th Transportation Company, 394th CSSB, 103rd ESC, said he coordinated with Iraqi civilians who run the orphanage to hold the Children's Day at COB Speicher's Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center-North, where the Iraqi children enjoyed pizza, made crafts and played games donated by the Families of 394th CSSB Soldiers.

"We wanted the kids to have the things they needed, and we wanted to see them smile," he said.

Shannon, a native of Bellevue, Neb., said he looks forward to holding another Children's day with the Iraqi children early next year, especially during the warmer weather when they can play outside.

Soldiers greeted 28 children with cheers as they entered the MWR center, joining the Iraqi youth as they drew with crayons and coloring books and played board games, ping pong and air hockey.

Staff Sgt. Anthony Hollanbach, a native of Greeneville,

N.H., and mechanic with 394th CSSB, handed out boots and shoes to the orphans who traded, mixed and matched footwear with one another.

"You could just see their faces light up at the sight of the shoes," said Hollanbach, who helped the children try on their new shoes. "The look on their faces makes it all worth it."

Staff Sgt. Travis Hill, the logistics noncommissioned officer in charge, 220th Transportation Company, 394th CSSB, spent time passing a soccer ball back and forth with the children wearing their new shoes.

"It's good to see them smile, said Hill, who calls Freemont, Neb. home. "It's not every day that we can help the kids in Iraq."

The children also took home plastic hats, balloons and other toys and party favors provided by the Families of the 394th CSSB Soldiers.

"This really helped the morale of the Soldiers as well as those of the children," said Stover, who helped plan the event.

The event was the first time in three years a Children's Day has been held at COB Speicher, he explained.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Coltin Heller, 109th MPAD, USD-N PAO

An Iraqi child from an orphanage in Tikrit receives a pair of shoes from Staff Sgt. Anthony Hollanbach, a mechanic assigned to 220th Transportation Company, 394th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 103rd Expeditionary Support Command, during Children's Day at the Morale, Welfare Recreation-North Center, Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Dec. 17, 2010.

Son continues father's military legacy

Spc. Andrew Ingram
USD-N Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – At a U.S. military base in northern Iraq, a U.S. Army Colonel, raised his right hand to administer the Oath of Office. Thousands of miles away in a classroom at Virginia Technical Institute, Blacksburg, Va., Christopher Fetterman stood at attention, right hand raised, awaiting his father's instruction.

"I Christopher Lee Fetterman ... do solemnly swear ... that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America ..."

Col. Patrick Fetterman, chief of staff, 4th Infantry Division and U.S. Division-North, commissioned his son Chris

as a 2nd lieutenant in the U.S. Army during a video teleconference Dec. 16.

"I do not think you can be the child of a military member and not be impressed by the fact that the military helps people to become better," Col. Fetterman said. "It is really gratifying to me that Chris has turned out to be a good man who wants to serve his nation and do right by his fellow man."

Second Lt. Fetterman completed his Reserve Officer Training Corps curriculum at Virginia Tech, where he was commissioned one day before receiving a bachelor's degree in history.

"It is good to know my hard work has paid off," said 2nd Lt. Fetterman after the ceremony. "I'm graduating from college as well, but being commis-



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Andrew Ingram, USD-N PAO
Col. Patrick Fetterman, Chief of Staff, 4th Infantry Division and U.S. Division-North administers the Oath of Office to his son Chris, commissioning him a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army, during a ceremony via video teleconference between Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq and Virginia Technical Institute, Blacksburg, Va., Dec. 16, 2010.

U.S. Division-North

sioned into the Army gives me a greater sense of accomplishment."

Second Lt. Fetterman said his father's 30 years of military service had an important impact on his decision to pursue a military career.

"Growing up in a military Family gave me a taste of it; I met Soldiers and I liked them," he said. "I saw how important their work was, and I wanted to be a part of it."

Col. Fetterman, a U.S. Military Academy graduate, said he looks forward to seeing his son

succeed as a Soldier.

Col. Fetterman's Wife, Sabina, and youngest son, Patrick, Jr. attended the ceremony, and the whole Family visited with Col. Fetterman face-to-face for the first time since he deployed to northern Iraq in November in support of Operation New Dawn.

Second Lt. Fetterman said he is slated to join 4th Brigade, 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky., as a transportation officer upon completion of the Basic Officer Leaders Course and air assault school.

Soldiers complete EO training

Maj. David Cushen
Equal Opportunity Program Manager
U.S. Division-North

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – Eighteen noncommissioned officers from U.S. Division-North graduated from an Equal Opportunity Leader Course at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Dec 17.

The 18 new graduates of the course, deployed as part of U.S. Division-North in support of Operation New Dawn, provided northern Iraq with enough equal opportunity leaders to effectively support four battalions.

"This course brought together students from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, and experience and was a good opportunity to break down cross-cultural barriers and stereotypes," said Staff Sgt. Vanessa



U.S. Army photo by Maj. David Cushen, USD-N
Staff Sgt. Christopher Babcock, telecommunications computer operator, Company C, Task Force ODIN, or Observe, Detect, Identify and Neutralize, and Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Jacobs, noncommissioned officer in charge of U.S. Division-North Strength Management, Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, use body language to demonstrate unwillingness to compromise during an Equal Opportunity Leader Course at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq Dec. 14, 2010.

Kennedy, medical supply clerk, Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division who was named by her fellow students as the "Most Valuable Contributor."

NCOs, completed the 30-lesson training program, learning how to assist commanders at the company and battalion levels assess unit climate, recognize conflict and resolve concerns at the lowest level.

Staff Sgt. Christopher Babcock said the EO Leader Course, taught at COB Speicher, is the most interactive, interesting and relevant EO class he has experienced.

"I didn't expect the group to become as close as it did in such a short amount of time," said the telecommunications computer operator assigned to Company C, Task Force ODIN, or Observe, Detect, Identify and Neutralize. "I have no doubt that some of the members of the class will keep in touch."

The course helped NCOs understand the severity of sexism in the Army and how to counter it, said Staff Sgt. Mark Middleton, a forward observer assigned to Company B, 1st Bn., 27th Inf. Regt., 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division.

"Being in combat arms units, we do not necessarily see the effect that sexism has among our ranks," Middleton said.

★ ★ ★ ★ LIVING THE DREAM ★ ★ ★ ★

'Quietdrive' brings pop-punk sounds to U.S. Division-North troops

Sgt. Coltin Heller
109th MPAD
U.S. Division-North

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPIECHER, Iraq – Amidst the bustling of nightly provisions, the sounds of punk rock music drew Soldiers' attention to the band on stage at the North Dining Facility at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Dec. 17.

"Quietdrive," a pop-punk band hailing from Minneapolis, Minn., played their original songs, "Jessica" and "Way Out," and also covered other well known songs to the amusement of the Soldiers.

"I have heard the band before, and it is awesome they are here," said Spc. Ignacio Berrones, an Army Reservist from Brownsville, Texas, who began following the band after hearing their song "Rise from the Ashes" on a video game in 2007.



Photo by Sgt. Coltin Heller



The band "Quietdrive," hailing from Minneapolis, Minn., played for the Soldiers of U.S. Division-North stationed at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Dec. 17, 2010. The punk band played original songs such as "Jessica" and "Rise from the Ashes," and covered other well known songs for the troops deployed in support of Operation New Dawn. Kevin Truckenmiller, the band's lead vocalist, said he enjoys playing for the troops, bringing the sounds of home. Truckenmiller said the band will continue to play for Soldiers in theater during the holiday season as they tour throughout Iraq and Kuwait.

Berrones, a food service specialist assigned to 370th Transportation Company, said he had no idea the band would play here, but his night was instantly better when he saw the group take the stage to get ready for the show.

"We know how hard it can be when you're away from

Will Caesar, the back-up vocalist and guitar player for the pop-punk band "Quietdrive," sings for troops deployed with U.S. Division-North in support of Operation New Dawn, during a show at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Dec. 17, 2010. The band, from Minneapolis, Minn., is scheduled to tour Iraq and Kuwait during the holiday season to boost morale and provide troops time to have fun and relax.

your Family for months at a time," said Kevin Truckenmiller, lead vocalist of Quietdrive. "Whenever we get the opportunity to help the troops by either bringing them a bit of home through our music or just giving them time to relax, we go out of our way to do it."

1st Sgt. Cornell Herrington, the trombone player and non-commissioned officer in charge of the 4th Infantry Division's Ivy Division Band, attended the show, and said it was great to have the band play for the Soldiers.

"It is amazing to look out and see the positive effect that music can have on the Soldiers," said Herrington, who

calls New Orleans home.

As a musician, there is nothing more rewarding than seeing the joy of music expressed on the faces of Soldiers, he added.

Soldiers in Baghdad and Kuwait will also be able to enjoy the band's music as they tour across theater in an effort to support the troops during the holiday season, said Truckenmiller.

"We like hanging out with the troops, getting to know them, and letting them know that the sacrifices they make are not forgotten by those at home," said Truckenmiller.

Cavalry Soldiers observe Advent in Iraq

1st Cavalry Division

Capt. Philip Crabtree
4th AAB Public Affairs
1st Cav. Div., U.S. Division-North

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE MAREZ, Iraq – Soldiers from many different backgrounds and cultures come together to serve in the Army, and one of the times each year where their traditions are most evident is during the Christmas season.

Troopers assigned to the 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division-North, joined the “Long Knife” Unit Ministry Team at Contingency Operating Site Marez to observe Advent, a practice dating back hundreds of years in the Christian faith.

“Advent is something Christians observe all over the world,” said Chaplain

Maj. Mike Patterson, 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div. “Its observance is about more than just missing Family. It unites Christians in spirit as they observe the Christmas season no matter where they are.”

Advent is marked by the four Sundays preceding Christmas, and there are several traditions associated with its observance, the lighting of candles being prevalent among them, said Patterson, a native of Vero Beach, Fla.



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Philip Crabtree

Chaplain Maj. Mike Patterson, brigade chaplain of the 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, leads Soldiers and civilians in worship at Marez Chapel, Dec. 5. Patterson, a native of Vero Beach, Fla., spoke about the themes of joy, peace, hope and love respectively during the four Advent Sunday services preceding Christmas.



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Philip Crabtree, 4th AAB PAO, 1st Cav. Div.

One candle of the Advent Wreath is lit each Sunday in the four weeks leading up to Christmas. The Christ Candle is placed in the middle and is not lit until Christmas Day. Soldiers assigned to the 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division-North are celebrating Christmas in Ninewa Province, Iraq, this year as the brigade supports Operation New Dawn.

“We are observing Advent with the use of four different candles symbolizing different sentiments,” he said. “Each Sunday we light an additional candle with all four candles symbolizing joy, peace, hope and love. On Christmas, we will light the fifth and final candle to symbolize the coming of Christ.”

Soldiers and civilians from COS Marez said they were eager to participate in Advent services. Many of them do not observe Advent as a part of the celebration of Christmas in their own Families but had the opportunity to see how meaningful it is to others.

“I’m really not familiar with it,” said 1st Sgt. Ricardo Luera, company

first sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div. “I see it as a traditional practice among some of my Soldiers.”

Sgt. Greg MacKinnon, a civil affairs noncommissioned officer assigned to the U.S. Army 412th Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to the 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div., said he is more familiar the practice of Advent.

“My Family didn’t observe it growing up, but through my wife, who is Catholic, I learned more about it,” said the native of Columbus, Ohio. “It’s special to me because it brings me closer to my wife and the traditions in her faith.”

Advent is just one way 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div. Soldiers will celebrate Christmas this year. Soldiers will do their best to stay connected in spite of being deployed thousands of miles away from their Families.

“Christ is the focus of my Family’s Christmas celebrations,” said Luera, a native of Edinburgh, Texas. “We usually open presents just after midnight, and we definitely go to church. This year I’ll be connected to them through Skype as they open presents, and I get to see the happiness on their faces through the webcam.”

Since the “Long Knife” Brigade’s inception in 2005, the brigade has deployed to Iraq three times and spent three Christmases away from their Families. The Soldiers of 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div. deployed to Iraq to assume a new mission in October for a one-year deployment in support of Operation New Dawn.

Hey Doc: 'Counting sheep isn't good enough'

Staff Sgt. Charles Temple
4th DSTB Troop Medical Clinic
U.S. Division-North

"'Hey Doc:' seems I can't get enough sleep. I'm dragging all the time, and the more tired and fatigued I become, the less rest I seem to get. What's going on?" – signed "Snooze Button."

Dear "Snooze Button,"

One of the most common things that affect Soldiers' lives during a deployment is insufficient or improper sleep. If you do not feel rested after a full-night's sleep or if you are having problems with alertness, performance and health – you may be experiencing sleep deprivation or have a sleep disorder.

Not enough sleep and poor quality of sleep are two factors that contribute to sleep deprivation. An insufficient amount of sleep can be the result of insomnia, sleeping during the wrong time of day, and abnormal movement during sleep.

Sleepwalking, sleep apnea and jetlag are also common causes of insufficient or poor sleep. Poor quality of sleep can also be the result of an uncomfortable, unfamiliar, or chaotic sleeping environment, or an individual's physical and emotional states, such as obesity, depression, anxiety, pain or illness.

Failure to address these problems causes suboptimal work performance and increased risk of accidents. Additionally, poor sleep is associated with high blood pressure, respiratory disorders and a weakened immune system.

The "magic" number that everyone hears is eight hours of sleep nightly, but some people only require four to six hours to perform optimally. Good sleep habits, or quality hours of sleep, are more important to maintain a healthy lifestyle than the number of hours of sleep. Remember, quality is better than quantity.

The acronym T.I.R.E.D. is a helpful reminder of what's important.

"T" means Time: the human body sleeps in 90-minute cycles. In order to rest for the proper amount of "time," plan to wake up at the end of a 90-minute cycle. If awoken in the middle of a sleep cycle, you will feel worn

out because, your body is not ready to wake up yet.

"T" is for Intensity of activity. Your body burns energy as it sees fit for whatever it is doing at the moment and will store energy to use later. Sedentary people do not expend as much energy and may not sleep well as a result.

"R" stands for routine, performed before going to sleep or lying down to sleep. Remember, humans are creatures of habit and your body easily adapts to repetitive patterns. Therefore, reading in bed when retiring for the night gets your body ready for reading instead of sleeping. The bed is for sleeping.

"E" stands for environment or surroundings. Turn off lights, televisions and radios at bedtime. Sometimes a fan or something similar making "white noise" will help deal with a noisy environment.

And lastly "D" ... the dreaded diet! No, this is not necessarily in reference to healthy eating, although that is important. It refers to your digestive system doing most of its work while you are asleep. If you eat or have caffeine right before trying to sleep, your digestive tract will be in overtime

or the caffeine may kick in and interfere with restful sleep.

Some helpful techniques to improve sleep are doing physical training later in the day—but not right before bedtime; not eating or drinking caffeine within four hours of bedtime; only sleeping in a bed; controlling the environment as much as possible; and trying some muscle relaxation techniques.

If these are tried and fail to improve sleeping habits in four to five days, seek medical aid.

Some medications commonly used for the treatment of sleep disturbances are Benadryl, Melatonin, Lunesta and Ambien. The first two are used to treat mainly acute disorders such as jetlag and shift work adjustment. The latter two are controlled substances and are not for every sleeping disorder.

Are you getting the proper amount and quality of sleep? If the answer is "No," combat sleep deprivation by trying a few simple techniques to potentially prevent harmful accidents, situations and medical risks.

So, get some rest, check your Soldiers, and Ironhorse Strong, keep those questions coming.

T

Time. the human body sleeps in 90-minute cycles. In order to rest for the proper amount of "time," plan to wake up at the end of a 90-minute cycle.

I

Intensity of activity. Your body burns energy as it sees fit for whatever it is doing at the moment and will store energy to use later. Sedentary people do not expend as much energy and may not sleep well as a result.

R

Routine, performed before going to sleep or lying down to sleep. Remember, humans are creatures of habit and your body easily adapts to repetitive patterns. The bed is for sleeping, so if you read or use the computer, sit up or get out of bed.

E

Environment or surroundings. Turn off lights, televisions and radios at bedtime. Sometimes a fan, or something similar, making "white noise" will help deal with a noisy environment.

D

Diet. No, this is not necessarily in reference to healthy eating, although that is important. It refers to your digestive system doing most of its work while you are asleep.