THE IVY LEAF

Happy Thanksgiving!

UNITED STATES DIVISION - NORTH

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4 ★★★★ ESTABLISHED IN 1917 TO HONOR THOSE WHO SERVE ★★★★ NOVEMBER 26, 2010

Microgrants lead to large improvements

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

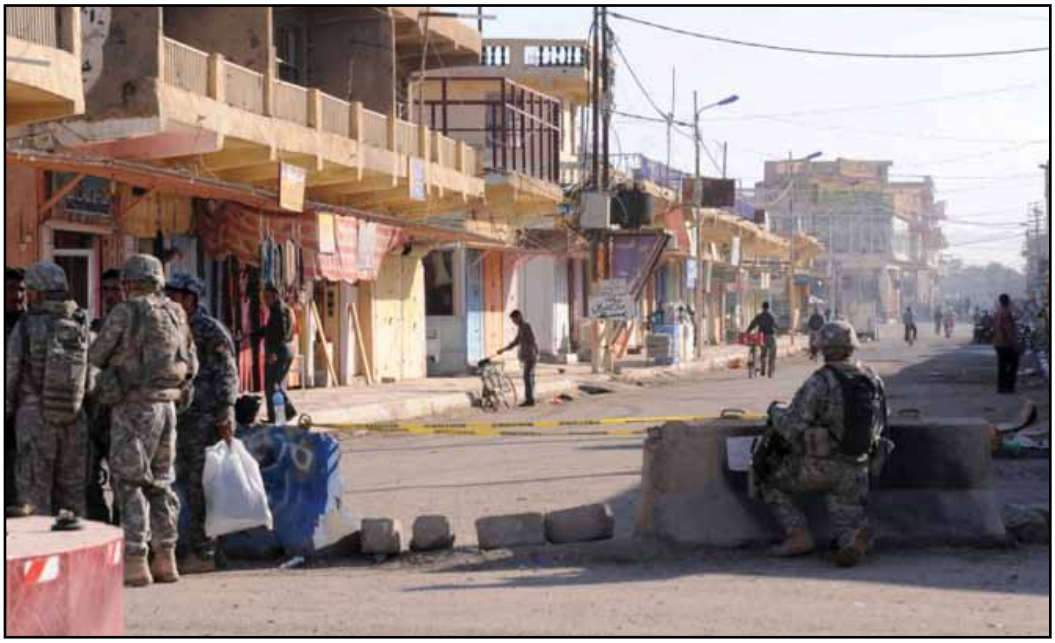

Photo by Spc. Robert England, 2nd AAB Public Affairs, 25th Inf. Div., USD-N

The Muqdadiyah marketplace, or suq, recently reopened following the completion of many renovation projects. More than 1500 vendors flocked to reopen shops throughout the market after receiving microgrants from 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd AAB, discussed local security procedures with Iraqi Police while on guard at a market in Muqdadiyah, Diyala province, Iraq, Nov. 7, 2010.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARHORSE, Iraq – Soldiers from 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, members of the Diyala Provincial Reconstruction Team and Zaid Al Azawi, the Muqdadiyah Q'ai'mmaqam, visited a renovated bank in the suq, or marketplace, in Muqdadiyah, Diyala province, Iraq, Nov. 7 as a precursor to its reopening scheduled for later this month.

The Sala-Aruba Suq Bank was not always the beacon of progress that it is now.

Capt. Jason Velasco, fire support officer, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd AAB, 25th Inf. Div., said that bombings and Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices were a regular occurrence just a few years ago.

He also said that insurgent forces ran rampant in the otherwise desolate marketplace, and the building that previously stood where the rebuilt bank is currently located was a safe haven for Al Qaida terrorists.

Tariq Ahmenijed, a shop owner who has been doing business in the community for almost three decades, was directly affected by the insurgent activity.

"I have been in business here since 1982," he said. "Before security received an overhaul, my shop was destroyed by the insurgent bombings. I had to shut down completely."

The Red Crescent, an international organization operating in Iraq with the same principles as the Red Cross, has assisted in providing humanitarian relief in similar situations in the past.

Hazim Surraj, the director of the Diyala Red Crescent, echoed Ahmenijed's first-hand experience.

"This area was a battlefield," said Surraj. "There was nobody here besides insurgents until the military operations implemented by the Iraqi and American security forces at the end of 2007."

Velasco said U.S. Forces implemented strategies to defeat the insurgents in the area, but the market suffered collateral damage in the destruction of the bank.

Velasco said Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police increased security measures after the operation to ensure Al Qaida would not return to the suq, ushering in the beginning of the rebuilding process.

"When the IA and IP increased security, the local people wanted their market back," said Velasco. "The United States Agency for International Development, and a couple other organizations helped rebuild the infrastructure of the suq, laying concrete for the sidewalks and making sure the road was paved."

Once a solid foundation was in place, the focus shifted to bringing previously displaced shop owners back to

See MARKETPLACE, pg. 4

STEADFAST AND LOYAL IRONHORSE FIT FOR ANY TEST DEVIL LONGKNIFE WARRIOR

IRONHORSE STRONG

Soldier of the Week

While serving as the Battle Non-commissioned Officer of Task Force Saber Tactical Operations Center, Staff Sgt. Eric Galindo Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, Task Force Saber, became aware of possible improvised explosive device emplacers in the squadron's area of operations.

Taking initiative, the Houston, Texas-native began to coordinate and monitor the unmanned aerial vehicle and fixed wing radio traffic that was developing the situation, along with contacting the Tactical Operations Center to begin coordination for observation of the area. Galindo's initiative played a critical role in the scout weapons team's ability to quickly launch, and defeat the IEDs, clearing the route for Iraqis and U.S. forces.

Throughout the duration of the night, Galindo successfully managed to coordinate and monitor two fixed wing and one unmanned aerial vehicle assets, keeping both the scout weapons team and all additional higher headquarters elements informed as the situation developed.

U.S. Army photo

Staff Sgt. Eric Galindo is the 'Ironhorse Strong: Soldier of the Week' for the week of Nov. 21, 2010 for his outstanding initiative which made it possible to monitor and defeat IED emplacers.

Garry Owen snipers ready IA soldiers for marksmanship competition Page 3

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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

Garry Owen snipers ready IA soldiers for marksmanship competition

By Pfc. Angel Washington
4th AAB Public Affairs
1st Cav. Div., USD-N

JOINT SECURITY STATION INDIA, Iraq — The crack of multiple 5.56 rounds echoed through the morning air at a rifle range just outside the gates of Joint Security Station India, U.S. Division-North, Iraq, announcing the training and preparation Iraqi Army soldiers are undergoing with their partners from the U.S. Army.

Snipers assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, mentored soldiers of the 2nd Iraqi Army Division commando unit Nov. 18.

"We are experts on our weapon systems," said Staff Sgt. Michael Tice, the sniper section sergeant. "We are passing on the skills that we have developed to make them more proficient."

Groups of IA special forces combat team instructors have been training with the "Garry Owen" Soldiers of 2nd Bn. 7th Cav. Reg., to enhance their basic rifle marksmanship skills with the rifle for an upcoming Iraqi Army marksmanship competition in Baghdad.

"Before this training the IA soldiers had never touched an M16," said Tice, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y. "We have taught them how to zero and shoot from various positions. About a week ago their shot group was within three inches, but now they are within a half inch."

Each Iraqi loaded their weapon, focused on their targets and used the four basic principles of marksmanship to obtain the best possible shot group. Breathing steady, applying the proper trigger squeeze, and holding a proper sight picture on assigned targets, the IA soldiers fired their weapons improving their skills during the training.

From standing to kneeling, and at times lying in the prone position, soldiers consistently and accurately engaged their targets.

"It's been a great experience," said Spc. Ahmed Aoda, an Iraqi special forces combat team instructor from Babil, Iraq. "We've become more proficient at zeroing and on the fundamentals of marksmanship."

At the competition, IA soldiers will

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U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Angel Washington, 4th AAB PAO, 1st Cav. Div., USD-N

Spc. Mohamed Adubil Mohamed, a special forces combat team instructor assigned to the 2nd Iraqi Army Division's commando unit, fires his weapon during marksmanship training Nov. 20, 2010. Mohamed, a native of Kirkuk, Iraq, has been training with troopers from the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, in preparation for the Iraqi Army's marksmanship competition in Baghdad which will test their proficiency on the M16 rifle.

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the market.

The PRT and 2nd AAB stepped in, issuing microgrants to persuade vendors to refurbish and reopen their shops, many of which had been destroyed.

"We came in with the microgrant surge," Velasco said. "We have paid out approximately 1400 microgrants at $5000 apiece. It has gone from literally, like 40 guys in shops that were just barely hanging on to well over 1500 vendors throughout the whole suq."

Surraj also stressed the crucial role the microgrants played in convincing the shop owners to return.

"Most of the people here have been displaced to other provinces or other areas," he said. "The U.S. did a good job in renovating the infrastructure of the market, but the business was not really established until the microgrant projects were implemented."

The microgrants allowed vendors to replace damaged goods, repay loans and renovate their shops.

Al Azawi, the Muqdadiyah Q'ai'mmaqam, or mayor of mayors, said as the shop owners began reopening for business, customers began to trickle back into the market, bringing with them the defibrillator of currency for their flatlined economy.

"People are starting to come out and shop again thanks to the improvements in security, infrastructure and economy," he said. "It helps that security is now the number one priority in Muqdadiyah."

With the heightened security provided by Iraqi Police forces in Muqdadiyah, the trend of customers' spending has continued its upward climb since the reopening of the suq.

Al Azawi said this constant circulation of money from customers through shop owners has not only facilitated the need for a local financial institution, but also assisted in stabilizing the economy and promoting economic growth in the region.

"The economy here is good for the bank because the shop owners in the market need somewhere to deposit the money they make, which will keep the bank in business and stimulate our local economy," he said.

In addition to the resulting economic stability, Surraj said the microgrants positively impacted the community by providing more short-term and long-term jobs.

Contract and construction workers found employment during the ongoing renovation process while waste management workers were able to return to their routes in the marketplace as well.

The microgrant program in Muqdadiyah is one of several programs in the Diyala province.

Velasco said similar programs have been implemented in Jalula and Khalis suqs as well.

With security and financial stability in place, the people of Muqdadiyah can now focus on rebuilding their sense of community in the marketplace.

Continued from SNIPERS, pg. 3

shoot their M16s from different positions and distances, striving to have the tightest shot group once completed.

Pfc. Royce Applegren, a sniper assigned to HHC, 2nd Bn., 7th Cav. Reg. said it felt good to coach the Iraqis both improving their skills and brushing up on his own.

"Once we are done training, they are going to be able to go train their Soldiers everything we have taught them," said the Chicago-native. "I am confident they will do well in Baghdad."

After the IA soldiers complete their marksmanship competition, they will continue to receive additional training from the 2nd Bn., 7th Cav. Regt. Soldiers throughout the next year.

U.S. Army photos by Pfc. Angel Washington, 4th AAB PAO, 1st Cav. Div., USD-N

Pfc. Sam Forsyth, a sniper assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, from Apple Valley, Minn., marks his Iraqi counterpart's shot group during marksmanship training Nov. 20, 2010. After training with the Americans, the Iraqi marksmen will pass on their new skills to other Iraqi soldiers.

Iraqi Army special forces soldiers assigned to the 2nd Iraqi Army Division commando unit, assume the prone position during select marksmanship training Nov. 20, 2010. After training with U.S. forces for a marksmanship competition in Baghdad, the Iraqi marksmen will use their skills to train their comrades.

The 'Golden Lions,' 'Thunderhorse' Soldiers spread goodwill for Eid

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

The "Lion of Kirkuk" bids farewell to a group of children as he walks towards the Domies District Police Station in Kirkuk, Nov. 17, 2010. The lion, along with the local Iraqi Police and Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, attached to 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, passed out candy to children at a nearby playground to celebrate the holiday of Eid.

An Iraqi Police officer dons the "Lion of Kirkuk" costume before handing out candy and playing with children at a playground in Kirkuk City, Iraq, during the second day of the Eid holiday Nov. 17, 2010. The Lion of Kirkuk, the mascot of the elite "Golden Lions" Combind Security Forces, was joined by Iraqi Police from the Domies District Police Station and 'Thunderhorse' Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, from Fort Hood, Texas. The "Thunderhorse" cavalry troopers of 2nd Bn. 12th Cav. Reg., are attached to 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, deployed to U.S. Division-North, in support of Operation New Dawn.

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

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – Iraqi Security Forces, with the assistance of "Thunderhorse" Soldiers from 2nd Squadron, 12th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division distributed small gifts and candy in and around Kirkuk, to celebrate the Eid holiday, Nov. 17.

The "Lion of Kirkuk" joined in the festivities and was very popular with the local children.

The Lion of Kirkuk is the mascot of the Combined Security Force, an elite unit composed of Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police, Kurdish Peshmerga, and American Forces integrated down to the squad level.

The cavalry troopers of 2nd Bn., 12th Cav. Reg. were proud to be part of the Iraqi goodwill effort, said Spc. Nathan Howe, a combat medic assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Bn., 12th Cav. Reg.

"I had a great time being out there," said Howe. "You can tell the children were not expecting it, but when they realized what was going on, oh boy, you could not get them to leave."

The Iraqi Security Forces distributed more than 1,000 pieces of candy during their day-long effort in Kirkuk.

"Thunderhorse Troopers are proud of the partnership that the Iraqi Police in the city of Kirkuk have with us," said Lt. Col. Joe Holland, commander, 2nd Bn., 12 Cav. Regt., which is responsible for advising, training, and assisting Iraqi Security Forces in and around the city of Kirkuk. "This was a great way for the Iraqi Police to build goodwill with the people whom they serve, and for our Soldiers to show the citizens of Kirkuk that we will assist the police at every opportunity."

"Thunderhorse is a vital part of our team," said Col. Eric Welsh, commander, 1st AATF, 1st Infantry Division from Fort Riley, Kan. "They've built a strong relationship with their Iraqi partners and enabled the Iraqi Police to take the lead in all operations within the city."

The 1st AATF, deployed to U.S. Division-North in support of Operation New Dawn, began their mission to develop, mentor and train ISF, reinforcing U.S. forces partnership with local security forces in Kirkuk, Nov. 7.

Two Soldiers receive Purple Heart

Purple Heart recipients wounded in action, convoy hit by rocket

By 1st Lt. Jay Jones
2nd AAB Public Affairs
25th Inf. Div., USD-N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARHORSE, Iraq – Two Soldiers with 66th Engineer Company, Task Force 225, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, received the Purple Heart medal during a ceremony at Contingency Operating Site Warhorse for wounds received in action Nov. 12.

"There was smoke everywhere," said Staff Sgt. John Yost, recalling the day his vehicle was hit by a rocket while patrolling on a convoy operation in late September.

Yost, the vehicle commander, and his gunner, Sgt. Heston Ngiraiwet, both sustained shrapnel and burn injuries when their vehicle was hit, but continued their mission until they saw their vehicle to safety.

Both Soldiers were released from the clinic shortly after being treated for their wounds and returned to duty.

Yost credited the other Soldiers in the vehicle with keeping their cool under fire and controlling the situation.

"Every Soldier in that vehicle did exactly as they were trained to do without being asked," said Yost, a native of Greeley, Colo. "I feel very fortunate to serve with the caliber of Soldier that I do. I feel it is because of them, my Family is not receiving the Purple Heart for me."

Ngiraiwet, a native of Wahiawa, Hawaii, said that he looks on the ordeal as a first-hand learning step and now knows how to react if such an event happens in the future.

"I use the experience as a tool," he said. "We train and train and train, but now I have the experience."

One day after Veteran's Day,

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Murray, Commander, Task Force 225, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, pins the Purple Heart Medal on Sgt. Heston Ngiraiwet, 66th Engineer Company, Task Force 225, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, during a ceremony Nov. 12, 2010 at Forward Operating Base Warhorse. Ngiraiwet, a vehicle gunner, suffered shrapnel and burn wounds when a rocket struck his vehicle during a convoy mission, but remained in the gunner's hatch until his vehicle made its way to safety.

Yost and Ngiraiwet were honored during the official presentation ceremony at the COS Warhorse theater.

The engineer company commander and first sergeant, Capt. Christopher Pierce and 1st Sgt. Keith Nordlof, looked as if they could not be more proud of their two Soldiers, or happier that they were both able to stand and receive their awards that day.

"Directly after they were hit, they were begging to get out of the clinic so they could continue their mission," said Capt. Christopher Pierce, commander, 66th Eng. Company.

"These are both great noncommissioned officers who have bright futures as combat engineers," said 1st Sgt. Keith Nordlof, senior enlisted leader, 66th Eng. Company.

In addition to his Purple Heart medal, Ngiraiwet said he will keep his helmet and wear it with the burn and shrapnel marks displayed.

Ngiraiwet said seeing the scarred helmet will act as a motivator to himself and the other Soldiers.

The Soldiers of 2nd AAB, based in Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, deployed to U.S. Division-North in the summer of 2010 in support of Operation New Dawn.

U.S. Army photos by 1st Lt. Jay Jones, Task Force 225, 2nd AAB, 25th Inf. Div., USD-N

Staff Sgt. John Yost, 66th Engineer Company, Task Force 225 of 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, salutes battalion commander Lt. Col. Jeffrey Murray after receiving the Purple Heart during a ceremony at Contingency Operating Site Warhorse, Nov. 12, 2010. Yost suffered shrapnel and burn wounds after a rocket struck his vehicle while on a convoy operation.

4th AAB launches T-Hawk into Iraqi skies

By Pfc. Angel Washington
4th AAB Public Affairs
1st Cav. Div., USD-N

JOINT SECURITY STATION INDIA, Iraq – U.S. Soldiers prepared to send a Honeywell RQ-16A Tarantula Hawk soaring into the sky at a remote checkpoint in northern Iraq.

Spc. Kevin Tran, an infantryman assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, launched the "T-Hawk" during an exercise at Joint Security Station India, Wanah, Iraq, Nov. 15.

The T-Hawk is a small unmanned aerial system that provides close reconnaissance capabilities that assist in alerting U.S. Soldiers about potential threats without physically exposing them to the threats. The 4th AAB "Long Knife," deployed to U.S. Division-North in support of Operation New Dawn, is one of the few units in Iraq that have a T-Hawk.

"The T-Hawk will help make the area safer," said Tran, a UAS pilot and native of Arlington, Texas. "We can look for hazardous materials and search for the enemy 'outside the wire' without leaving."

> *"This will aid our mission during Operation New Dawn. It will also help our Iraqi Army counterparts in locating improvised explosive devices."*
>
> – Spc. Kevin Tran
> Company A, 2nd Bn., 7th Cav. Regt.
> 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div., USD-N

Tran placed the unit's new air asset on the ground, ensuring it had enough space around it for safety purposes, and within a blink of an eye, the T-Hawk soared into the sky.

"This will aid our mission during Operation New Dawn," said Tran. "It will also help our Iraqi Army counterparts in locating improvised explosive devices."

While Tran monitored the path of the T-Hawk in the sky, his Iraqi Army counterparts observed the aerial operations, learning from the system.

Similar to other unmanned aerial systems the brigade uses, the T-Hawk still has different capabilities making it more effective in the 2nd Sqdn., 7th Cav. Regt.'s mission to train and mentor Iraqi Security Forces, said 1st Lt. Josh Hollingsworth, a fire support officer assigned to Company A.

Hollingsworth, who hails from Huntsville, Ala., said the T-Hawk's hovering feature has enhanced the U.S. Forces capabilities in Iraq.

"When we're watching targets, instead of flying around and coming back to it, we can hover over it," he said.

Tran said he plans to train more Soldiers on the steps to launch the T-Hawk to certify them on the system, increasing the unit's capability by providing multiple operators.

Spc. Kevin Tran, an infantryman assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, prepares a Honeywell RQ-16A Tarantula Hawk for launch in Wanah, Iraq, Nov. 15, 2010. The T-Hawk, an unmanned aerial system, will assist the unit in supporting operations with their Iraqi partners during Operation New Dawn.

Photos by Pfc. Angel Washington, 4th AAB PAO, 1st Cav. Div., USD-N

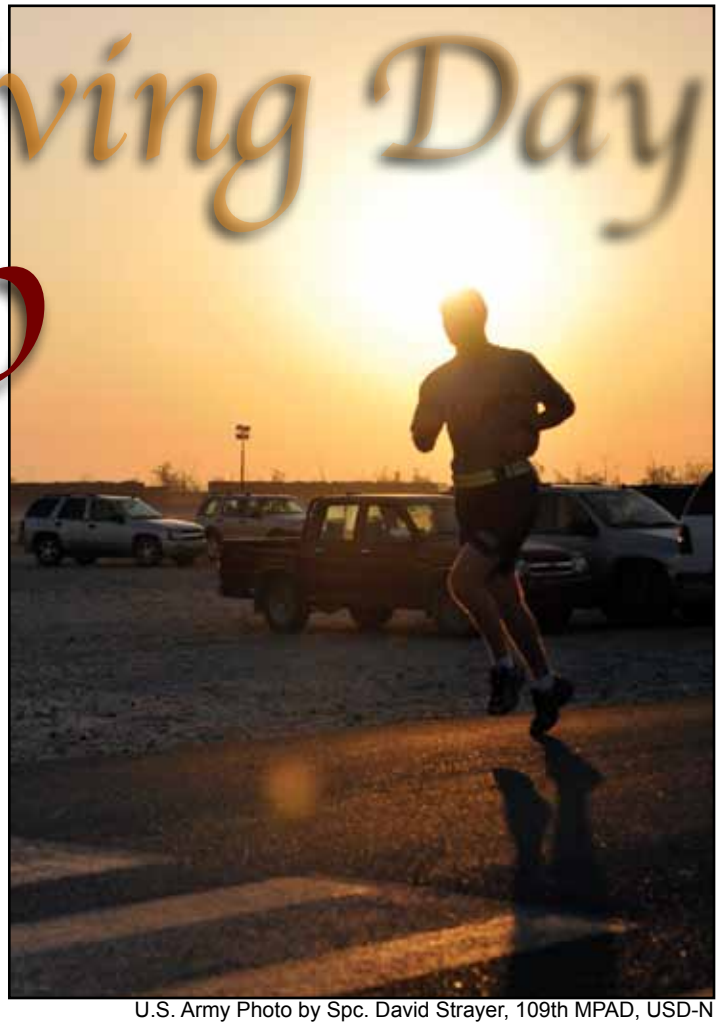
A Honeywell RQ-16A Tarantula Hawk, an unmanned aerial system, lands at a checkpoint in Wanah, Iraq Nov. 15, 2010. Spc. Kevin Tran, an infantryman assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, launched the T-Hawk to ensure it worked properly. The UAS has the additional capability of hovering over objects for constant coverage.

★★★★ Living the Dream ★★★★

Thanksgiving Day

U.S. Division-North

2010



U.S. Army Photo by Spc. David Strayer, 109th MPAD, USD-N

▲ A participant in the Task Force Ironhorse five-kilometer "Turkey Trot" crosses the finish line as the sun rises over Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Nov. 25, 2010.

Participants in the Task Force Ironhorse Turkey Trot form up on the starting line in the moments preceding the commencement of the five-kilometer race at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Nov. 25, 2010. ▼

U.S. Army Photo by Spc. David Strayer, 109th MPAD, USD-N

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

▲ Capt. William Rothstein, an administrative law attorney from Norwich, Conn., Staff Judge Advocate, Company A, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, crosses the finish line with a winning time of 19 minutes, 16 seconds, followed closely by Lee Howe, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, from Tea Side, England, during the Task Force Ironhorse "Turkey Trot" at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Nov. 25, 2010

Photo by Spc. David Strayer

◀ The Tikrit Tigers and Mosul Panthers, made up of officers assigned to Task Force Ironhorse, compete for the ball during the Thanksgiving "Turkey Bowl" football game at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Nov. 25. The Tigers stomped the Panthers 91-49. The game gave the officers a break from their busy work-schedule to participate in a light-hearted holiday activity.

See THANKSGIVING, pg. 9

Living the Dream

Continued from THANKSGIVING, pg. 8

Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel A. Dailey, senior enlisted leader, U.S. Division-North, asked Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, about life at Contingency Operating Site Edge, Iraq, Nov. 25, 2010. During his visit Dailey thanked the Soldiers for sacrificing a Thanksgiving Day with their Families to serve their nation as a part of Operation New Dawn. ▼

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

Photo by Spc. Andrew Ingram

▲ Pfc. Jeffery Barnell, right, a cavalry scout Assigned to Troop B, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, attached to 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, from Syracuse, N.Y., the Squadron's oldest Soldier, holds the larger half of a wishbone beating out Pfc. Vincent Rolstand, a forward observer assigned Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, from Fridley, Minn., the Squadron's youngest Soldier during a Thanksgiving Day celebration at Rabiyah Point of Entry, Iraq, Nov. 25, 2010.

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

▲ First Lt. Anthony McFarlane, platoon leader, Company B, 2nd Squadron, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, gives a tour of Combined Check Point K2, a joint security site near Mosul, to Maj. Gen. David G. Perkins, commanding general, U.S. Division-North, and Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel A. Dailey, senior enlisted leader, USD-N, Nov. 25, 2010. Perkins and Dailey spent Thanksgiving Day traveling to posts throughout U.S. Division-North to show their support and gratitude to the troops in northern Iraq.

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

▲ Maj. Gen. David G. Perkins, commanding general, U.S. Division-North, presents the Task Force Ironhorse coin to Pfc. Ernest Pittman, Jr., air conditioner mechanic, Company B, 225 Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, from Greenville, N.C. in recognition of outstanding performance in assisting his unit's mission in support of Operation New Dawn, at Join Base Balad Nov. 25, 2010. Perkins traveled throughout USD-N to visit with and give recognition to deserving Soldiers Thanksgiving Day.

Family Focus

Ft Carson, Colorado

Coats of many colors

Photo by Rick Emert, Mountaineer Staff

Family members and Soldiers look through 1,200-1,500 coats, Nov. 19, 2010, at the Fort Carson Special Events Center. The coats were collected by Fort Carson's Enlisted Spouses Charitable Organization and community members, as well as the Redistribution Center in Denver. "It's an overwhelming blessing to be a part of this," said Holly Dailey, ESCO advisor. "You have tears in your eyes, because people are so thankful." Volunteers from the Redistribution Center, ESCO and the Warrior Transition Battalion assisted with distribution of the coats.

Ho! Ho! Ho!

'Holidays are here: package and mailing tips and reminders'

The holiday season is upon us, and we have just a few friendly reminders for you to share with your family as they are considering what gifts to send you.

Remember, the holiday season is the busiest season for the United States Postal Office and we would like to assist you in this hectic process so you can get your packages on time. As your family and friends are busy shopping for gifts, baking cookies and thinking of their deployed Soldier we want to share with you a few helpful reminders to pass along this Holiday Season:

- Do not address mail to "Any Service Member" or "Any Wounded Warrior" because the package will not be delivered. Mail with invalid addresses will also not be delivered.
- Do not mail carbonated drinks or similar items as they may explode during transit.
- Enclose all personal hygiene items such as lotion, shampoo, etc. in a sealable bag.
- Many items are listed on the "Prohibited Items" list in theater. Please check out the U.S. Postal Service website for a detailed list of those items.
- DoD Mail transit times will increase due to the volume of packages sent into theater.
- If you are sending packages to Iraq or Afghanistan with APO AE codes beginning with 093-, parcels will usually take at least 7-13 days.
- First Class or Priority normally takes at least 20-24 days to ship. Expect longer shipping times during the Holiday Season.

For more information on Package Services Go to "Supporting Our Troops" page on the U.S. Postal Service Web Site at: www.uspa.com/supportingourtroops/welcome.htm

Hey Doc:
'Are you or the rocks winning?'

Walking on rocks is part of the reality of being in our deployed environment. The rocks are here to help keep down dust and limit mud during the rainy season.

For those of us that are not injured walking on the uneven terrain of the rocks actually assists in enhancing our reaction time and balance. Unfortunately there is a narrow window for error.

It is estimated that you have approximately one tenth of a second to recover from a stumble, trip or perturbation (e.g. rolling over on a rock or bumped by another individual).

If you are one of our Warriors that have spine or lower extremity pain, numbness in your feet, poor balance, or a past history of ankle sprains, rock walking is a daily challenge.

Below are a few simple techniques that hopefully will help you starting winning the battle against the rocks:

1. Proper Shoes – If you have flexible feet, flat feet, or if you tend to roll your ankle, a stiffer shoe will be safer on these surfaces. Your combat boot may be more comfortable for walking on the rocks than your running shoes. Some types of running shoes are meant to allow for motion. This motion, along with how your feet and ankles are structured may allow too much flexibility. Instead of wearing a typical running shoe, try trail running shoes that are stiffer and provide stability against uneven surfaces.

2. Use your vision and definitely use a flashlight at night – Vision is a critical component to balance. The benefit of vision is that it allows you to either step over an obstacle or preset your muscles and joints to be able to properly gauge and react to level and uneven surfaces. If you do not believe me, try standing on one foot while maintaining your balance with your eyes open and then with your eyes closed.

3. Balance – Could you stand on one foot with eyes closed without losing your balance? Can you hold it for at least 30 seconds? Now try it on your other leg. If during the test you noticed your body was swaying, you had to put your foot down, or open your eyes – you may benefit from balance and proprioception (muscle-memory) training to make your body more resistant to injury when walking on the rocks. You can practice the following exercises (static balance progression and the lower extremity clock drill) to help enhance your balance and proprioception.

Static Balance Progression – Stork Stance:

(Hint: Have a counter top or solid object nearby that you can hold onto if needed.) Try maintaining your balance on each leg for 30-45 seconds. You can work on the progression of this exercise in the morning and night time while you brush your teeth.

Level 1: Stand on one of your legs with your arms out to the side at 90 degrees and hold that position with your eyes open and then with your eyes closed.

Level 2: Stand on one of your legs with your arms down by your sides and hold that position with your eyes open and then with your eyes closed.

See HEY DOC, pg.12

Continued from HEY DOC, pg. 11

Level 3: Stand on one of your legs with your arms by your sides with your other leg either out to the side or out in front and hold that position with your eyes open and then with your eyes closed.

Level 4: Perform the exercises outlined above while standing on a compliant surface (like a pillow or foam).

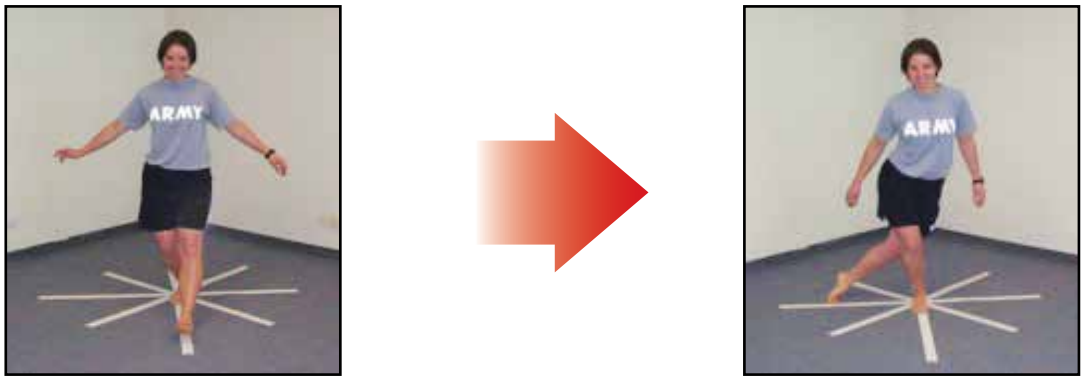
Dynamic Balance Exercise – Lower Extremity Diagonal Clock Drill

(Practice this exercise with eyes open, every other day. It works balance, core stability and flexibility.)

Starting Position: Stand with one leg planted and the opposite leg slightly flexed.

Action:

1. Imagine that the floor in front of you is the face of a clock.
2. With the right leg planted (as shown below), lightly tap the foot of the unplanted leg on the ground in front of you, first at "12 o'clock " and then move counter clockwise at each progressive hour until you reach the "3 o'clock" position.
3. Make sure to maintain your balance and try to keep your hip, knee and ankle of the planted leg in the center of the clock. Once you get to the 3 o'clock position switch legs.
4. With the left leg planted, you will tap the unplanted (right) leg from "12 o'clock" to "9 o'clock position"(or as far as you can go comfortably) moving clockwise.



Common Errors:

1. Do not put too much weight through your foot when you tap.
2. Do not let the trunk lean when tapping the foot on the ground.

Variations:

- Increase tempo without compromising form or knee flexion.
- Reach your foot out further.
- Progress from shoes on, to shoes off, then to an unstable surface (like standing on a pillow).

If you have pain with the above exercises or if they do not help over a 3-4 week period – you might need to see your primary care provider or 21st Combat Support Hospital Physical Therapist for additional guidance.

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