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Ghuzlani Warrior Training Center brings Iraqi Army full circle



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Shawn Miller, 109th MPAD, USD-N PAO

Iraqi soldiers with 1st Battalion, 11th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, role-play as civilians while another soldier bursts the door during room clearing training, part of urban operations training at Ghuzlani Warrior Training Center, Jan. 24, 2011. Iraqi battalions train at GWTC during month-long cycles as part of Tadreeb al Shamil, Arabic for All-Inclusive Training, an Iraqi training program preparing Iraqi Army units for national defense operations independent of U.S. forces.

Editor's Note: The 1st Battalion, 11th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division completed the first training cycle in support of Tadreeb al Shamil, Jan. 26, at Ghuzlani Warrior Training Center. This feature article highlighting Tadreeb al Shamil training was written before the completion of the training cycle.

Sgt. Shawn Miller
109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
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GHUZLANI WARRIOR TRAINING CENTER, Iraq – As the U.S. military's advise and assist role in Operation New Dawn continues across Iraq, U.S. and Iraqi forces stepped up collaborative efforts in January, conducting collective unit-level training for Iraqi battalions at the Ghuzlani Warrior Training Center near

Mosul in northern Iraq.

Soldiers of 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, based out of Fort Hood, Texas, began operations at the GWTC in December 2010 to train 3rd Iraqi Army Division units as part of the Iraqi training initiative named Tadreeb al Shamil, Arabic for All-Inclusive Training.

“The Ghuzlani Warrior Training Center is designed to train the 3rd Iraqi Army Division on light infantry skills,” said Lt. Col. John Cushing, commander, 1st Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt.

The Iraqi soldiers learn tactics on a four-week schedule, Cushing explained, with the first week focusing on individual and squad-level tactics, and then moving into platoon, company and battalion-level exercises in the succeeding weeks.

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WARRIOR
LONGKNIFE
DEVIL
FIT FOR ANY TEST
IRONHORSE
LONGKNIFE
WARRIOR

STEADFAST AND LOYAL
IRONHORSE
FIT FOR ANY TEST
DEVIL
LONGKNIFE
WARRIOR





IRONHORSE S' STRONG: Soldier of the Week

U.S. Army Photo

“Ironhorse Strong” Soldier, Pfc. Trevin Grimaldi, an infantryman from Port Saint Lucie, Fla., assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, leads Iraqi soldiers in first aid training at Contingency Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq, Nov. 28, 2010. Through his dedication to duty, demonstrating professional initiative, Grimaldi proved himself a valuable asset and a true infantryman to the Soldiers of Company C. Grimaldi’s selfless service, initiative and attention to detail earned him the honor of Ironhorse Strong Soldier of the Week.

Operation New Dawn is an extraordinary mission, and as such, requires extraordinary Soldiers willing and able to take initiative and overcome any challenge to get the job done and done right.

Pfc. Trevin Grimaldi, Company C, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, distinguished himself from his peers as a Soldier who can be counted on to meet and exceed set standards on a routine basis.

“(Grimaldi) prides himself as an infantryman and an American Soldier,” said Cpl. Michael Klipp, infantry team leader, Company C.

Since the “Warrior” Brigade assumed its mission to advise,

train and assist Iraqi Security Forces in June 2010, Grimaldi distinguished himself by besting every challenge to always accomplish the task at hand, said Klipp.

During a first aid training exercise with the Iraqi Army’s 20th Brigade, Grimaldi, a licensed Emergency Medical Technician, took the initiative to use his medical expertise to serve as a primary instructor, leading a first aid class for Iraqi soldiers.

“Our platoon was short-handed that week due to several of our noncommissioned officers being on leave,” said Sgt. Benjamin Johnson, Grimaldi’s infantry squad leader. “It was pretty big when he stepped up to teach the class; it showed a lot of initiative on his part to do that as a private first class.”

When Company C was tasked to provide over watch for enemy activity along a major supply route in support of Operation Tiger North Shore II, the Ironhorse Strong Soldier from Port Saint Lucie, Fla., again demonstrated initiative, taking an active role in the completion of the mission.

Grimaldi volunteered to assist another Soldier in his battalion’s first operational flight of a Raven unmanned aerial system.

“He stayed up for hours the night before the mission to become more familiar with the Raven UAS,” said Johnson. “He impressed a lot of people during that mission. He executed flawlessly.”

His knowledge of equipment and the role he plays in his squad, combined with his loyalty to the unit, shows that Grimaldi is a true infantryman, said Johnson.

Grimaldi’s constant motivation and dedication to his platoon and the mission made him this week’s Ironhorse Strong Soldier.

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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**

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U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Shawn Miller, 109th MPAD, USD-N PAO Iraqi officers with 1st Battalion, 11th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, plan training on a terrain model prior to the start of operations for a day of exercises at Ghuzlani Warrior Training Center, Jan. 23, 2011. U.S. Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, mentor IA troops during the month-long training cycles at GWTC while observing Iraqi leadership during planning and operations. U.S. Soldiers paid close attention as their assigned Iraqi squads ran through each event, offering feedback and knowledge gained from their own experiences in combat.

Since the dissolution of Iraq's Army and security forces in May 2003 under Coalition Provisional Authority Order No. 2, Iraq began the process of rebuilding its forces under U.S. supervision and mentorship.

During Tadreeb al Shamil, IA leaders focused on tactical military operations in support of national defense, leaving crime fighting efforts within the cities to the Iraqi Police and other Iraqi Security Forces agencies.

Iraqi soldiers of 1st Battalion, 11th Brigade, 3rd IA Division, are currently working their way through the initial training cycle at Ghuzlani, the first center of its kind, training battalion-size elements in U.S. Division-North.

Maj. Hashim Hadar, commander of 2nd Company, 1st Bn., 11th Bde., said his soldiers' capabilities are improving as the partnership with American troops continues.

"The soldiers are getting very good training, and they are learning new skills here," said Hashim, a seven-year veteran of the new Iraqi Army. "We never trained with the Americans before, but this training is much better than any received before."

The GWTC is built on the site of a former infantry training area pre-dating the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Cushing explained, and many of the senior Iraqi officers attended the old training site as young lieutenants.

U.S. trainers at Ghuzlani now focus on getting those former lieutenants, many now unit commanders, ready to take charge of their companies and battalions as they build unit cohesion, he explained.

"This is the first time that they've actually been together at the same place at the same time as a battalion," said Cushing, a native of Rochester, Mich. "This gives them an opportunity to train on some collective tasks and to get them prepared for their mission to defend against external threats."

U.S. officers and trainers employed a hands-off approach to the instruction, issuing the missions and orders while letting Iraqi leadership conduct the planning and execution.

"The battalion commander gets an opportunity to train his officers through this process, and then he gets an opportunity to evaluate all his companies as they go through the different training lanes," said Cushing.

U.S. Soldiers on the ground paid close attention as their assigned Iraqi squads ran through each event, offering feedback and knowledge gained from their own experiences in combat.

"The training was very good and we are welcoming the friendly forces," said Hashim, noting the progress made by his soldiers during an urban training mission.

"At the beginning, we were unsure of their capabilities, but we were pleasantly surprised when they actually got on the ground," said Cushing. "They know a lot more than we had anticipated for never having been together as a unit."

Beyond supervisory mission guidance and support, U.S. forces offered little logistical support to the Iraqi troops living at Ghuzlani, instead requiring the Iraqi battalions to run a self-sustaining program in order to facilitate autonomy.

Iraqi cooks baked fresh bread every morning and prepared their own meals for the infantrymen of the battalion, returning from exercises. Support soldiers kept the rows of tents maintained in the living area as the soldiers of the battalions made Ghuzlani home for four weeks.

Both Cushing and Hashim noted the relationships that soldiers on both sides have developed as they work together daily in the effort to fulfill the mission.

"It's great to be able to advise and assist the Iraqi Army and finish off all the hard work that people in the past 10 years have put into this country," said Pfc. Michael Agunzo of Levittown, N.Y., a cavalryman assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt.

Agunzo added that guiding the Iraqi forces on daily routines is also developing him to become a better Soldier.

The training he administers here will aid him in the future as a noncommissioned officer, he noted.

"We're actually learning a lot from them, probably as much as they're learning from us," said Cushing.

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Iraqi Army units demonstrate combat readiness

U.S. forces observe completion of training cycle, Tadreeb Al Shamil

25th Infantry Division

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

KIRKUSH MILITARY TRAINING BASE, Iraq – Iraqi soldiers assigned to 3rd Battalion, 21st Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, conducted a live fire exercise Jan. 24, marking the conclusion of 25 days of Tadreeb al Shamil, Arabic for All Inclusive Training, at Kirkush Military Training Base, Iraq.

The event, the first performed at a battalion level, provided those in attendance a glimpse of training led by U.S. Division-North Soldiers assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade,

25th Infantry Division.

“This is a culmination of a long and hard training period,” said Maj. Gen. David G. Perkins, commanding general, 4th Infantry Division and U.S. Division-North. “The units took the training seriously and performed in a professional manner.”

Perkins joined several Iraqi officers, attending the exercise to observe the training, as the Iraqi Army battalion fully demonstrated its level of effectiveness to individual soldiers.

Demonstrating to the audience gathered before him, the Iraqi battalion commander briefed an operation order, reviewing a terrain model and



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

Iraqi soldiers assigned to 3rd Battalion, 21st Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, sweep through an objective during a rehearsal conducted near Kirkush Military Training Base, Jan. 23, 2011. Iraqi soldiers of 3rd Bn. conducted a live fire exercise the following day, marking the conclusion of a 25-day training cycle at KMTB. U.S. Division-North Soldiers assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, instructed Iraqi units on various tactics, techniques and procedures, as part of Tadreeb al Shamil, an Iraqi-directed effort to modernize the Iraqi Army.

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Valuing input from the U.S. instructors, the Iraqi units are also very interested in critiquing themselves through after action reviews, said Cushing.

“They can take not only our techniques but then combine them



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Shawn Miller, 109th MPAD, USD-N PAO

U.S. Army Sgt. James Meegan, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, instructs Iraqi troops of 1st Battalion, 11th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, during urban operations training at Ghuzlani Warrior Training Center, Jan. 24, 2011. Meegan and the Soldiers of 1st Sqdn. mentor IA battalions during month-long training cycles at GWTC as part of Tadreeb al Shamil, Arabic for All-Inclusive Training, an Iraqi training program to prepare Iraqi Army units for national defense and large-scale military operations independent of U.S. assistance.

with theirs,” Cushing said. “Then I think that they’ll be much better prepared than when they came here.”

A number of Iraqi soldiers from each battalion are selected as trainers during the cycle, and then tasked with continuing and expanding their knowledge to new soldiers once the battalion leaves Ghuzlani, Cushing explained.

Cushing and his command staff hold daily meetings with Iraqi officers to discuss ideas and exchange feedback about training goals.

“The Iraqi Army asked for very disciplined, demanding training,” Cushing said. “We have a great opportunity here to train the battalions as they come in.”

Throughout 2011, each of the battalions from the 3rd IA Div. are slated to complete 25-day rotations at Ghuzlani each month as the IA transitions to autonomous military operations.

Following the toppling of Saddam Hussein’s regime, under Operation Iraqi Freedom and the subsequent reconstruction of Iraq’s Army and security forces, U.S. Soldiers aim to bring their counterparts to full national capability with Tadreeb al Shamil and the GWTC.

All of the training at Ghuzlani is dedicated to the more than 4,000 U.S. Soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice for Iraq, Cushing stated.

“This will be yet another chapter in this whole conflict, and I think one of the most critical, because it’s the long-lasting impression that we’re going to leave here with the Iraqi Army in terms of training,” he said.

'Garry Owen' infantrymen mentor IA trainers

1st Cavalry Division

Spc. Terence Ewings
4th AAB Public Affairs
1st Cav. Div., U.S. Division-North

JOINT SECURITY STATION INDIA, Iraq – U.S. troopers of 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, partnered with Iraqi Army instructors to review course material for the first two phases of Operation Lion Leader Forge, Jan. 18.

U.S. Soldiers observed and mentored the instructors during Leader Forge, an "on-the-job" training program for IA instructors teaching Iraqi soldiers military and leadership skills.

"We're not trying to change the foundation of their military; we're just giving them more tools to work with," said 1st Lt. Jeff Lalka, an infantryman and platoon leader assigned to Company D, 2nd Bn., 7th Cav. Regt. "We advise and assist the IA instructors as they teach the incoming students."

The IA instructors led the trainees through a comprehensive review of basic rifle marksmanship and soldiering skill exercises covering ambush reaction drills, improvised explosive device reaction drills, individual movement techniques and combat lifesaver training.

The IA instructors are doing a great job

teaching the other Iraqis as the training continues to improve with each new training cycle, said Lalka.

Troopers of 2nd Bn., 7th Cav. Regt., 4th AAB led the first phase of Operation Lion Leader Forge, which began in early January, providing basic rifle marksmanship and reflexive fire training for Iraqi Army soldiers.

During the first weeks of Leader Forge, cavalry troopers instructed distinguished graduates from the previous training cycle; nine of which returned to become instructors and teach the second rotation which began the first week of January.

Cpl. Husam Hussem, an IA training instructor from Baghdad, said he learned additional military and leadership skills, gained from working with 2nd Bn., 7th Cav. Regt., to train the Iraqi leaders participating in the program.

"I was paying attention and learned a lot from watching the U.S. troops when I was in the class (in December)," said Hussem, who served in the Iraqi Army for four years as a driver, before becoming an instructor. "Now it is paying off as I teach my own class."

"We're just here to aid the trainers, giving them advice and ensuring they train the trainees the right way," said Pfc. Earl Carson, an infantryman assigned to Company D, 2nd Bn., 7th Cav. Regt.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Terence Ewings
Pfc. Amir Taha, a native of Mosul, Iraq, and an Iraqi Army artilleryman, practices reflexive fire techniques with an M16 rifle prior to range qualification, Jan. 12, 2011.

Assisted by Soldiers of 2nd Bn., 7th Cav. Regt., the IA trainers provided remedial instruction for IA trainees who needed help with the courses.

When the IA instructors pulled the soldiers to the side for remedial training, Carson, with the help of an interpreter, advised the IA instructors to effectively help the trainees.

"The end result of two cultures coming together and us making them better at what they do here in their country is my favorite part of the training," said Carson. "It's good to see that even after we're gone, they're going to retain the skills that they got from this training."

After the trainees pass the examination, the U.S. and IA trainers will supervise the Iraqi soldiers during dismounted patrols.

Team Leader Sgt. Roberto Garcia, who hails from Plano, Texas, said U.S. Soldiers, like Carson, serve as the subject matter experts for the Iraqi trainers.

"(Carson) is one of those Soldiers, and can handle that responsibility, because he's real squared-away," Garcia said.

Each training rotation culminates with a final exam and buddy team live-fire exercise designed to test all of the tactical skills the Iraqi Army soldiers developed during Leader Forge.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Terence Ewings, 4th AAB PAO, 1st Cav. Div., USD-N

Pfc. Earl Carson, an infantryman from Ranson, Va., assigned to Company D, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, observes Cpl. Husam Hussem, an Iraqi Army training instructor from Baghdad, as he teaches an IA trainee how to apply a combat application tourniquet during Operation Lion Leader Forge, Jan. 18, 2011.

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U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Coltin Heller, 109th MPAD, USD-N PAO
After receiving simulated enemy fire, Iraqi soldiers of 3rd Battalion, 21st Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, assault through an objective during a live fire exercise near Kirkush Military Training Base, Jan. 24, 2011. The live fire exercise, part of Tadreeb Al Shamil, a 25-day training cycle at KMTB, marked the first time a battalion-sized element conducted a training event. U.S. Division-North Soldiers of Company A, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, taught Iraqi units tactics, techniques and procedures modeled after tactics used by U.S. forces, in an effort to modernize the Iraqi Army's warfighting capabilities.

detailing an advance of Iraqi forces, as platoon leaders took notes, preparing for the mission.

Iraqi Army companies of 3rd Bn. began the mission, moving across wind-swept hardpan toward a complex of makeshift structures looming behind raised berms and water carved trenches. Mortars supported the maneuvering units, ready to provide indirect fire when called upon. A reserve platoon covered the unit's flank, preventing a counter attack.

When forward units received simulated fire, the Iraqi soldiers reacted without hesitation. Under direction of platoon leaders, the units reformed; one platoon laid down a rattle of suppressive fire as the other platoon moved to high ground, gaining a positional advantage. Mortar rounds exploded in the distance, effectively preventing the enemy from escaping.

At the command of "Enemy!" Iraqi mortar crews of 3rd Battalion, 21st Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, fire at simulated targets during a live fire exercise near Kirkush Military Training Base, Jan. 24, 2011. The mortar crews, part of 3rd Bn., acted in a support by fire capacity, trapping the simulated enemy between falling rounds and ground troops. U.S. Soldiers of Company A, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division trained Iraqi Army units of 3rd Bn., 21st Bde., during a 25-day training iteration at KMTB, part of Tadreeb Al Shamil, an Iraqi-directed initiative to provide Iraqi Army units individual and collective training to modernize the IA's warfighting capability.

Once in position, mortar fire shifted and both platoons assaulted and cleared the objective, before detonating a cache of explosive materials found in one of the buildings, signaling the mission's completion.

"This is a significant day for Diyala province and the 5th Iraqi Army Division," said Col. Malcolm Frost, commander, 2nd AAB, 25th Inf. Div., at the conclusion of the event. "This demonstrated that the (3rd Bn., 21st Bde.) is capable of internal and external defense."

Perkins also praised the Iraqi forces, for coming so far in a relatively short time.

"It is clear why your command chose you for the training program," he said again addressing the Iraqi troops. "You have taken what was given to you and have made something better out of it."

Company A, "Gator," Soldiers trained their Iraqi partners

on various tactics, techniques and procedures, ranging from physical training to tactical movements and fire techniques, during the 25-day training cycle at KMTB.

Gator Soldiers modeled the training after U.S. Army standards, presenting Iraqi units with modern warfighting tactics.

"The 5th (Iraqi Army Division) was one of four units chosen for the modernization process," said Frost. "This process will integrate all parts, from the battalion all the way to the team level."

During the cycle, U.S. Soldiers stressed the importance of Iraqi noncommissioned officers, who gained knowledge to instruct and train small units within the battalions, maintaining proficiency within the unit.

"Congratulations go to the leadership of the units out there," said Perkins, referring to units in the demonstration. "Nothing can get done without good leadership."

Iraqi units slated to rotate

through KMTB will benefit from previous units' experience, adapting and improving the training, he said.

"It's good to see Iraqi commanders are already talking on ways to improve the training, to make it more efficient," said Perkins.

Although U.S. Soldiers trained the units for the duration of the rotation, Iraqi soldiers took the lead conducting all aspects of the event. Gator Soldiers watched from a distance.

The training allowed the Iraqi Army unit to maintain its abilities as well as to plan for future rotations at KMTB, resulting in a self-sustaining force.

Perkins commended the Iraqi troops for making great strides with training.

"It's very gratifying to see how the Iraqi Army troops are moving forward," he said. "We are all thankful for this process, and look forward to strengthening our great partnership with Iraq."



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

299th Engineer Company dismantles improvised bridge

Spc. Andrew Ingram
USD-N Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – Soldiers of 299th Engineer Company, 724th Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Brigade dismantled an Improvised Rafting Bridge on the Tigris River near Sharqat, Iraq, Jan. 23.

The same morning approximately one mile upriver, a new permanent bridge built by Iraqi hands opened to traffic for the first time.

“This is the end of a long process that has been going on since 2008,” said Capt. Michael Lay, commander, 299th Eng. Company, 724th Eng. Bn., 36th

Eng. Bde. “This weekend full traffic will flow across the civilian bridge for the first time.”

Prior to U.S. forces emplacing the IRB, citizens of Sharqat used a ferry to cross the river, Lay explained.

Dismantling the IRB the same day a new permanent Iraqi-built bridge officially opened for citizens in the area, symbolizes the Iraqi people’s growing self-reliance, he said.

Haji Mustapha, an Iraqi civil engineer responsible for the new Sharqat Bridge, said he is grateful to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for providing the money and resources to complete a project that will benefit so many people in the area.



36th Engineer Brigade

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

Soldiers assigned to 299th Engineer Company, 724th Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Brigade, a U.S. Army National Guard unit stationed in Chippewa Falls, Wis., use a Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck to lift a piece of an Improvised Rafting Bridge out of the Tigris River during a bridge dismantling operation, near Sharqat, Iraq Jan. 23, 2011. After cutting the steel cable anchoring the bays to the riverbed, M2K Combat Bridge Boats guided each piece to shore where HEMTTs lifted the collapsible bays out of the water. The engineers dismantled the IRB in less than four hours.

“This bridge is beautiful and will serve this area well,” said Mustapha. “More than 100,000 people live around Sharqat and will use this bridge often.”

The Sharqat Bridge also provides the quickest route for traffic traveling between the cities of Mosul and Tikrit, Mustapha added.

Mustapha said while he is grateful to U.S. Forces for allowing Iraqi civilians to use the temporary bridge, he is proud that the people of the Sharqat have a permanent Iraqi built bridge to call their own.

U.S. Army engineers worked diligently during the past two years to maintain the IRB, originally intended to facilitate six months of continuous traffic, said Sgt. 1st Class Samuel Hall, platoon sergeant, 299th Eng. Company.

“We’ve been maintaining this bridge for several months,” Hall, a Maryland native, explained. “We have repaired holes and cleaned out all of the connecting pieces and tested it to insure the pieces would not fall apart.”

Spc. Michael Spragg, bridge crewmember, 299th Eng. Company, said the hours spent

maintaining the bridge in the past made disassembling it much simpler than anyone anticipated.

“This operation is going really fast,” said Spragg, who calls Naugatuck, Conn. home. “Our leadership estimated it could take us 24 hours to finish the job, and we have been here for four hours and already have the whole bridge taken apart with a lot of bays already out of the water.”

Spragg and Soldiers of 299th Eng. Company unhinged each section of the IFB by unscrewing two bolts at both sides of each bay.

After cutting the steel cable anchoring the bays to the riverbed, M2K Combat Bridge Boats guided each piece to shore where Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Trucks lifted the collapsible bays out of the water.

The 299th Eng. Company, 724th Eng. Bn., is a U.S. Army National Guard unit stationed at Chippewa Falls, Wis., attached to the 36th Eng. Bde., deployed to northern Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn.



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

Spc. Daniel Pelletier, a metal worker assigned to 299th Engineer Company, 724th Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Brigade, uses a torch welder to free a section of an Improvised Rafting Bridge on the Tigris River near Sharqat, Iraq, Jan 23, 2011. As the 299th Eng. Company engineers dismantled the IRB, vehicles crossed a brand new Iraqi made Sharqat Bridge which opened to Iraqi citizens for the first time the same day. The new Sharqat Bridge provides the quickest route for traffic traveling between the cities of Mosul and Tikrit.

Emergency response exercise prepares Kirkuk's elite police unit to react

1st Infantry Division



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Alyxandra McChesney, 1st AATF PAO, 1st Inf. Div., USD-N

Members of the Emergency Security Unit pull 360-degree security around two captured "terrorist" role players during an exercise in an arena in Kirkuk city Jan. 23, 2011. While ESU pulled security outside of the "glass house," a training method for room clearing, the Emergency Medical Team went into the building to execute a medical evacuation of a simulated wounded police officer notionally injured during the building clearing operation. The training operation consisted of several Iraqi Police teams working together to complete the simulated mission.

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

KIRKUK TRAINING CENTER, Iraq – The Emergency Security Unit and the Emergency Response Unit of the Kirkuk Police force conducted a training exercise designed to test their reaction skills at Kirkuk Training Center, in northern Iraq Jan. 23.

Soldiers of Provincial Police Transition Team, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, advised the elite Iraqi Police units during the planning phase of the exercise, serving only as observers and evaluators during the execution of the emergency response drills which took place in Kirkuk city.

Maj. Gen. Jamal, provincial director of police; Maj. Gen. Turhan, deputy provincial director of police; Brig. Gen. Khatab, commander of the Emergency Security Unit; Brig. Gen. Awad, Criminal Evidence Unit director; and Brig. Gen. Adel, inner-district commander, all observed and critiqued the exercise from a set of stone stadium bleachers overlooking the site.

Col. Taha, chief of Gorja Iraqi Police station took the center of the floor at the start of the exercise to explain the events taking place.

"The system we go by for doing training exercises, and operations is to brief, execute, conduct analysis and evaluation at the end," said Taha, alluding to a system similar to the U.S. Army's train, execute, conduct

after-action review cycle.

Taha provided a detailed brief of the procedures pertaining to the training operation using a sand table and map of the building, and pointed out to his superiors and subordinate commanders the key areas his unit would secure in the event of a terrorist attack on a building in Kirkuk city.

"In the event of getting a call that one of the buildings in the police station sectors is under a terrorist attack, and they are able to get into the building and take control of it, we are prepared to respond," said Taha. "We must be prepared to enter the building, clear it, and rescue any hostages."

Taha described what each element of the police force would be doing to complete the operation.

For this particular training iteration, the ESU utilized a "glass house" made up of three rooms, where hostages were being held. A glass house is a training device, using an outline representation of a building or room, to allow soldiers to practice room clearing procedures while trainers observe soldiers actions on the objective through "invisible" walls.

Taha explained the first group to secure the scene would be the Emergency Security Unit with their experienced raid team being used to breach and clear the building.

As the ESU raided the glass house during the practice exercise, one of the officers was "shot" by the role-player standing in as a terrorist, and the police officer fell to the ground.

The ESU squad commander secured the room, restrained the terrorists, and called forward an Emergency Medical Team on stand-by outside the secure perimeter to the building.

"I specifically put the injured police officer and the medical evacuation into this scenario, because I feel it's very important that everyone knows how to react if someone were to be shot during a mission," said Taha.

Taha explained the K-9 and Iraqi Ordnance Disposal would be called in to clear the room of any explosives before the Criminal Evidence Unit would move into the rooms to collect evidence.

"We gave the CEU three main duties, first to take finger prints, second to take blood samples at the scene, and third to confiscate the weapons in

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U.S. Soldiers assist Iraqi Federal Police distribute school supplies

Spc. Angel Washington
4th Advise and Assist Brigade Public Affairs
1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division-North

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE MAREZ, Iraq – Soldiers of 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, assisted the 3rd Iraqi Federal Police Division delivering school supplies to an Iraqi school in Al Mansour district of western Mosul, Iraq, Jan. 13.

Young children lined up with smiles on their faces as they discovered the gifts brought for them by Soldiers and Iraqi Policemen.

The toys and school supplies were gathered and donated by American civilians and non-profit organizations and distributed to two schools located in west Mosul, said Sgt. Greg MacKinnon, a Civil Affairs noncommissioned officer assigned to 412th Civil Affairs Battalion.

“It is great to be able to help everyone,” said MacKinnon, a native of Columbus, Ohio.

The children get the enjoyment of receiving gifts and needed school supplies while affording the Iraqi Security Forces the opportunity to strengthen bonds and build trust within the communities, said MacKinnon.

U.S. forces observed and advised the ISF, who led the mission in both the planning and execution phases.

The civil affairs team assisted with the mission to aid the ISF in their public outreach mission, garnering trust, community-level stability and pride, said Lt. Col. Sam Curtis, commander of Task Force Spear, 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div.

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U.S. Army photo by Spc. Angel Washington, 4th AAB PAO, 1st Cav. Div. An Iraqi policeman, assigned to 3rd Federal Police Division, hands out soccer balls and pencils to children at a school in the Al Mansour district, Jan. 13, 2011. Soldiers of 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division distributed school supplies and toys sponsored by non-profit organizations and U.S. civilians.



U.S. Army Photo by Pfc. Alyxandra McChesney, 1st AATF PAO

A police officer from Kirkuk province Iraqi Police Emergency Security Unit takes a “terrorist” role player into custody during a simulated hostage situation in Kirkuk, Iraq, Jan 23, 2011. The training exercise scenario called for the ESU to secure and clear a notional building that had two “terrorists” and one “hostage” role players. The ESU successfully entered the building, capturing the terrorists and rescuing the hostage.

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a safe, professional manner,” said Taha.

At the end of this particular scenario, the ESU captured the “terrorists,” securing the role players outside the building to be transported to a police station and placed in the custody of the CEU.

The CEU then worked to get more information and evidence from the suspects before being processed through the Iraqi legal system, said Taha.

Following the conclusion of the operation, Maj. Gen. Jamal offered a critique of the exercise to his subordinate commander.

“The briefing was very clear. I liked that you explained everything prior to the exercise so we knew exactly what was going on when the operation was taking place,” said Jamal, complimenting Taha on the briefing of the operation order

prior to the exercise. “In my opinion this is great because I can follow along rather than being surprised during the exercise.”

“The training exercise today was Iraqi led—the first out of the past four exercises that had minimal U.S. assistance,” said Lt. Col. Ardrelle Evans, commander of Provisional Police Transition Team, part of the 512th Military Police Company, attached to 1st AATF, 1st Inf. Div. in support of Operation New Dawn.

During the after action review, Maj. Gen. Jamal said he wanted to do unannounced training exercises in the future.

“I think doing unannounced and unscripted training exercises is a great idea, so he can see exactly what these police force agencies are capable of doing,” said Evans.

'Long Knife' Brigade honors fallen comrades

Sgt. Shawn Miller
109th MPAD
U.S. Division-North Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE MAREZ, Iraq – Senior leaders of U.S. Forces-Iraq and U.S. Division-North joined 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, to pay respect to two fallen “Long Knife” brothers in arms during a memorial ceremony at Contingency Operating Site Marez, Jan. 22.

Sgt. Michael Bartley and Sgt. Martin LaMar, cavalry scouts of Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th AAB, were killed while conducting training with Iraqi Army soldiers near Mosul on the morning of Jan. 15.

Col. Brian Winski, commander of 4th AAB, said the incident has not deterred the brigade’s resolve during Operation New Dawn, as the unit will persevere to honor the sacrifice made by these troopers.

“We’re going to continue not in spite of what happened; we’re going to continue because of what happened,” said Winski.

Winski praised the actions of the squadron during the attack and the steps the Long Knife troopers now take to carry on and finish the mission of advising and training their Iraqi counterparts.

Ending this final phase of the war here responsibly honors the sacrifices of Bartley and LaMar and the sacrifices of the more than 4,000 U.S. service members who have given their lives in Iraq, Winski said.

“When danger presented itself, they ran to it and not away from it, and they closed with and eliminated the threat immediately,” said Winski. “It’s moments like this where a unit’s character is truly revealed.”

While Soldiers on both sides are rebuilding renewed confidence after the incident, Iraqi and U.S. Forces still have mutual trust and will endeavor to drive on, he said.

Winski also offered condolences to the



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Shawn Miller

Col. Brian Winski, commander of 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, left, and Command Sgt. Maj. Antoine Overstreet, senior enlisted leader of 4th AAB, say a final farewell to two “Long Knife” Brigade Soldiers during a memorial service at Contingency Operating Site Marez, Jan. 22, 2011. Sgt. Michael Bartley and Sgt. Martin LaMar, cavalry scouts of Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, were killed Jan. 15, 2011, while conducting training with soldiers of the 3rd Iraqi Army Division near Mosul. “It’s not going to deter us from our mission,” said Winski. “We’re going to continue not in spite of what happened; we’re going to continue because of what happened.”

Soldiers’ Families and the extended Family and friends within 4th AAB.

“We share their grief and the incredible loss of these two warriors,” Winski said. “Their Family is part of the Long Knife Family, and they always will be.”

Unit leaders and friends offered solemn eulogies and fond memories during the service, followed by a 21-gun salute and the echo of “Taps” from a lone bugler outside.

“Two of our country’s greatest sons gave the ultimate sacrifice for what I believe historians will look back on as one of the most important steps toward Iraqi autonomy since the beginning of the war,” said Capt. Thomas Herman, commander, Troop A, 1st Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt., 4th AAB.

“Sgt. Michael Bartley and Sgt. Martin ‘Mick’ LaMar embody the warrior spirit; the spirit they instilled in the Iraqis they trained, and the spirit they showed when they gave their last full measure of devotion to this ideal,” Herman said.

Rifles stood next to empty boots, dog tags hanging from the helmet-topped stocks, as fellow Soldiers offered a final goodbye to Bartley and LaMar.

“They are brothers that have not been lost, but moved on to carry every single one of us as a guardian through our missions ahead,” said Sgt. James Meegan, Troop A, 1st Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt. “These memories will be carried on, the good and the hard, for the rest of our lives.”



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Shawn Miller, 109th MPAD, USD-N PAO

“Long Knife” Soldiers of 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, pay respect to fallen comrades during a memorial service at Contingency Operating Site Marez, Jan. 22, 2011. Sgt. Martin LaMar and Sgt. Michael Bartley, both of Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, were killed while conducting training with their Iraqi Army counterparts near Mosul, Jan. 15, 2011. “Sgt. Michael Bartley and Sgt. Martin ‘Mick’ LaMar embody the warrior spirit; the spirit they instilled in the Iraqis they trained, and the spirit they showed when they gave their last full measure of devotion to this ideal,” said Capt. Thomas Herman, commander, Troop A, 1st Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt., 4th AAB.

Chaplain's Corner: *Are you a spiritual Person?*

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

Mother's Day is still several months down the road—and it doesn't hurt to start planning now; soon Hallmark cards will assail us with cheery thoughts of what makes the "perfect mother."

Defining motherhood is challenging. The simple explanation that motherhood is the event of giving birth is technically correct, but very unsatisfying. In the same way, to define "spirituality" or "being spiritual" is an equally difficult task.

As with other things in our life, we are content just to say, "I'll know it when I see it." However, defining and understanding spirituality is essential before it becomes a force-multiplier in our lives.

Gen. George C. Marshall's well known quote underscores the importance of spirituality to today's Army, "The Soldier's heart, the Soldier's spirit and the Soldier's soul are everything. Unless the Soldier's soul sustains him, he cannot be relied on and will fail himself, his commander, and his country in the end."

Problems begin with the multitude of conflicting cultural definitions of spirituality. Each religious heritage approaches the problem from its own unique perspective.

Historic Christianity has long taught spirituality as the fundamental component of human nature, since humankind is made in God's image. By creation, we are made to respond to God from the heart.

The Jewish theologian, Abraham Joshua Heschel defined spirituality as a life lived in the continuous presence of the Divine.

Islam promotes spirituality as a clear relation between doing the will of Allah and a healthy soul.

The distinctive natures of Hinduism, Buddhism and atheism all take us further down the road of competing spiritual paradigms.

It is difficult to define spiritual phenomenon in an Army culture that, by law, must avoid the appearance and reality of endorsing one specific religion; yet, the question still remains, "Are you a spiritual person?"

Comprehensive Soldier Fitness and Spiritual Resilience Programs address us as spiritual persons, but what does that mean? The answer begins when we think of spiri-

tuality as that place within life where we connect with something greater than ourselves.

We confuse the fruit of spirituality—love, faith and hope—with the root of spirituality. The root is the place within where we feel the emptiness, aloneness and fear of being human, and yearn for something not confined by time and space. Spirituality is where we experience communion, community and connection to something greater, and perhaps, eternal.

How important is spirituality in your life? How do you measure your spiritual health?

We are spiritual people by nature and need to exercise and enhance spiritual growth.

Stretch yourself spiritually through the amazing story of grace and recovery by Vietnam veteran Dave Roeber, from 7 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., Jan. 31, at the Contingency Operating Base Speicher North-Morale, Welfare and Recreation center.

His life changing story of "Post Traumatic Growth" epitomizes connection to something greater and facing life's most challenging obstacles with courage.

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"These are some of the poorest children in the area," said Maj. Gen. Muhammad Sabri Latif Ali, commanding general of 3rd Iraqi Federal Police Division. "These children do not have much; we need to make sure to help them as much as possible."

As the U.S. and Iraqi forces distributed school supplies and various toys, the children gathered in social circles inside the school-house to tout and compare their gifts with friends.

"Many of these kids have lost a father or a mother," said Waleed Younis, the principal at Mosul Primary Elementary School. "We really appreciate the school supplies provided by the Americans; it has made the children very happy. Today was a good day."



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

Elementary school children hold up their books and soccer balls distributed by Iraqi 3rd Federal Police Division, at a school in the Al Mansour district, Jan. 13, 2011. Soldiers of the 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, provided the supplies given to the children by Iraqi policeman of the 3rd Federal Police Div.

Hey Doc: 'Did I just see a dog?'

Spc. Katy Palis
Behavioral Health
U.S. Division-North

"Hey Doc: Why is there a dog walking around U.S. Division-North? I thought we weren't allowed to keep dogs?" – signed "Timmy"

Dear "Timmy,"

The dog on a leash is not a pet, nor is she a stray that was "adopted" from the local countryside; adopting feral animals is against General Order No. 1.

While her complete name is Lt. Col. Iron Rose, we just call her "Rose." She is a Therapy Dog assigned to Taskforce Ironhorse Division Surgeon section. Rose's handlers are myself and Maj. Samuel Preston, psychiatrist, 4th Infantry Division and U.S. Division-North.

Don't let the rank intimidate you. Rose holds the rank

of lieutenant colonel because Army Regulations mandate all Military Working Dogs outrank their primary handler by one rank.

Her primary mission is to increase Soldier morale and help facilitate therapy sessions at the Combat Stress Control clinic. She spends most of her time with service members at U.S. Division-North Headquarters. Rose also visits units around Contingency Operating Base Speicher and travels to other locations to see the service members stationed at posts throughout northern Iraq.

Rose did not join the Army in the typical fashion: she was rescued from a Humane Society shelter in Colorado. A typical multi-cultural American, Rose is a combination of Belgian Malinois, Golden Retriever, and Greyhound.

She is very friendly but can be timid around new people

or large groups as is often the case with many dogs from animal shelters. If you see her, stop and say "hi," and, if you have some beef jerky to share, you will quickly make a new friend.

In 2007, the 85th Medical Detachment from Fort Hood, Texas, was the first unit to bring therapy dogs to Iraq. Deployed again, the 85th continues to utilize two therapy dogs in Northern Iraq. Sgt. 1st Class Zeke is stationed at Contingency Operating Site Marez, and Sgt. 1st Class Albert is stationed at Joint Base Balad.

Soldiers often ask why the Army allocates funds for a therapy dog.

There is scientific evidence that time spent with animals, specifically dogs, reduces anxiety. Physiological stress responses such as heart rate and blood pressure are reduced when therapy dogs are utilized.

In therapy, the dogs help break the ice with Soldiers who are nervous about sharing their difficult experiences.

The Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Army are conducting official studies to confirm the benefits of therapy dogs.

Since many service members have dogs back home, it also brings a little bit of normalcy to a very stressful and often chaotic place.

Units can request Rose to visit them by contacting their command or myself via e-mail at katy.m.palis@usdn4id.army.mil.

So "Timmy," keep some beef jerky in your pocket; keep an eye out for Rose and stay well.

Keep those questions coming, Taskforce Ironhorse!

U.S. DIVISION-NORTH AMATEUR PHOTO COMPETITION

U. S. Division-North Public Affairs is hosting a monthly photography contest to provide troops deployed across U.S. Division-North and supporting personnel an opportunity to demonstrate their photography skills.

The competition is open to members of Armed Services and all civilians and contractors currently serving with U.S. Division-North in support of Operation New Dawn.

Entries must be .jpg format with minimal resolution of 2100x1500 pixels, and a maximum of 3 mbs. Photos can only be altered to enhance brightness, adjust contrast, color-correct and crop. Excessive alterations or cropping that misconstrues the photo's original intention will be cause for disqualification.

Entries must include a unique title for identification, photographer's name, address, valid telephone, valid e-mail and caption information, including the Who, What, When, Where and Why explaining the entry.

Entries must have been taken on or after Jan. 1, 2011.

By submitting, the entry becomes U.S. government property and may be used on .mil websites, social media or other Department of Defense command information products. All photographs must be taken using personal cameras. Each contestant is limited to one entry per competition.

Photographs must be in good taste and cannot feature obscene images or gestures, alcohol/drug use, or any discriminatory or inflammatory imagery, and entries must comply with Operational Security standards. Photographs depicting secure locations, security badges, secret equipment, maps, documents, wounded or dead persons will be subject to disqualification and possible Uniform Code of Military Justice investigation.

Photographic quality and subject matter will be primary considerations in selecting winner. Top three entries for designated period will be posted to the U.S. Division-North Facebook page for all users to view and vote for their favorite.

At the end of each month, the photo with the most votes will be selected as the U.S. Division-North Public Affairs Photo of the Month, posted on Facebook; displayed in the Division Headquarters, and the photographer will be presented a coin by U.S. Division-North and 4th Infantry Division Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel A. Dailey.

Participants should submit all entries to U.S. Division-North Public Affairs at usdnbao@usdn4id.army.mil. Winning entries may be viewed at www.facebook.com/4thid?ref=sgm.