

Victory Times



Telling the United States Forces - Iraq story

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(Right to left) Maj. Gen. Jerry Cannon, deputy commanding general for detention operations and provost marshal general, United States Forces – Iraq, turns over the ceremonial key to staff Maj. Gen. Jawad Kadhem, deputy director, Iraqi Correction Service, and Fuad Ubaid Humood, deputy warden, Taji prison, to complete the turnover of 100 vehicles to the ICS, March 12, in Taji, Iraq.

USF-I Provost Marshal Office turns over vehicles to Iraqi Corrections Service

By Sgt. A.M. LaVey
USF-I Public Affairs Office

The United States Forces - Iraq Provost Marshal Office turned over about 100 vehicles to the Iraqi Corrections Service, a department within the Iraqi Ministry of Justice, in Taji, Iraq, March 12.

The vehicles, ranging in size from a motorized utility cart to small busses, were once used for USF-I detention operations, and are now to be used by the Iraqis for prisoner transport, security and other prison operations.

As the PMO accessed a number of

their prisons around Iraq, it was evident that the ICS was deficient in a number of different areas, said Maj. Gen. Jerry Cannon, deputy commanding general for detention operations and provost marshal general, USF-I. "There really isn't much we can do – we can advise, train and assist till the cows come home, but if they don't have the equipment to do these things, we find ourselves up against the wall."

The vehicles are just the first step in the process of handovers that are

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HAZMAT centers clean up Iraq

By Spc. Paul Holston
USF-I Public Affairs Office

Over the course of the war in Iraq, the country has accumulated a substantial amount of waste that has the potential to affect not only the environment, but the Iraqi people and U.S. forces on the ground as well.

Two hazardous waste treatment centers, one at Camp Al Asad and one at Camp Speicher, were created for the sole purpose of reducing and disposing of this type of waste.

Waste is described as hazardous when it poses a potential threat to the public health and/or environment because of its quantity or characteristics. These threats include pollution, impairment or injury, or causing death.

According to Gary Alicandro and Brad Banker, site managers for the hazardous waste treatment centers, an estimated 47 million pounds of waste from all over the Iraqi joint operations area have been treated since the facilities have been in operation. Since April 2010, the centers have processed over 15 million pounds and are currently processing an average of 75,000 pounds per week.

Both facilities were constructed to dispose of and treat millions of pounds of waste that have been collected since the outset of the war, said Alicandro.

The treatment centers receive and treat different types of waste such

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Commentary: Combat pay

By 1st Lt. Erika A. Wonn
USF-I Public Affairs Office

While stationed at Camp Victory in Baghdad, Iraq, I recently read an article in the Stars and Stripes that was republished from The Washington Post on March 19. U.S. Army Capt. Michael Cummings wrote that on his second deployment, he did not deserve his combat pay.

I wish that Capt. Cummings had done his homework. There is no doubt that certain places in the Iraq area of operations are more dangerous than others. Those service members who are deployed to the more hazardous areas are no doubt in harm's way much more often than those of us in "cushier" locations, such as the Victory Base Complex.

One thing that he may not remember is that at one time, Iraq was just as dangerous as Afghanistan. In Iraq, more than 36,000 U.S. military and civilian personnel have been killed and injured. In 2011, 23 have died and 113 have been wounded, according to a Department of Defense report released March 22.

It is extremely fortunate that while Cummings was deployed to VBC, no one was killed or injured. Unlike previous wars in our country's history, there are no front lines in this war. The enemy determines where the battle is fought.

While I do agree that the reform of our policies concerning government misuse is important, I don't agree that taking pay away from service members is the right way to do it. These men and women who are deployed around the world are just that - deployed. They are displaced from their families, away from their homes, doing what America has asked them to do. Do some of them choose to go to more or less dangerous locations? Maybe, but most of them are not given that choice. As Cummings should know, you go where you are told. You do what needs to be done.

Imminent danger is based on an assessment of threat and not what one person experienced while in theater. It is extremely fortunate that not all servicemen and women have to eat MREs or live in tents. But the fact

remains that whether they are in the thick of actual combat, without hot water and warm meals - they are all serving our country and are all in harm's way.

I'm sure that the Soldiers working at the more remote areas within Iraq enjoy VBC when they have the opportunity to visit. Believe it or not, our troops in Iraq are being attacked daily. Although we are wrapping things up and the mission has changed, our men and women in uniform are still here and are still doing their jobs. I am positive that families who have lost a loved one or have had their service member return home forever changed would agree.

Capt. Cummings, if you would like to return your combat pay, I'm sure that the Wounded Warrior Project or other veteran service organizations could find great uses for your "unearned" wages - like helping support those injured in Iraq and Afghanistan. Or maybe you could donate it back to the American people as a tax contribution. I truly do want to thank you for your service to our great nation. Together we serve.



Maj. Gen. Jerry Cannon, deputy commanding general for detention operations and provost marshal general, United States Forces - Iraq, meets with Iraqi staff Maj. Gen. Jawad Kadhem, deputy director, Iraqi Correction Service, as Cannon prepares to turnover 100 vehicles to the ICS, March 12, in Taji, Iraq.

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to come from the partnership efforts between the PMO to the ICS. There are plans to hand over more items as USF-I assists the ICS to develop and maintain their warehouses and supply chain distribution capabilities.

A lot of "extra stuff" that is no longer needed, has been amassed and consolidated here, said Cannon, a Michigan Army National

Guardsmen. "We have 22 more [shipping containers] of prison supplies and more to turn over." This would occur once the distribution channels are ready to go.

Oversight for the prisons of Iraq were once under the Ministry of Interior, but have now been placed under the MoJ. The corrections service, understaffed and without a budget, has always had to fight to get hand-me-downs from other ministries and as such, has had its needs perpetually overlooked, said Cannon.

"The ministries are big organizations and we wanted to make sure that these vehicles got to the Iraqi Corrections Service [instead of] being used as a...staff car [or for] judge training," said Cannon. "We are trying to...take care of [our counterparts] the ICS... and when we transfer all the prisoners over to them, we want them to be successful."

The PMO will continue its advise and assist mission as the deadline for reduction of American forces draws near and the last prisoner and piece of equipment is turned over to the ICS.

"At the end of the day, we will be able to look back without fear, regret or reservation that we will have done everything we could possibly do to set the Ministry of Justice and the Iraqi Corrections Service up for success to deal with this high-risk detainee population," said Cannon. "In doing so, we will provide another layer and level of security - not only for Iraq, but for this region and this part of the world."

Chaplain's Corner

By Sgt. 1st Class James Lewis
116th Garrison Command Chaplain's Office

A friend commented recently that with all of the chaotic scenarios that are going on, perhaps we were entering into an apocalyptic end to the world. Television and movies are full of such storylines. This apocalyptic end to civilization is also referred to in the doctrines of nearly all religions.

The events we are seeing around the world today are indeed troublesome, scary and make many of us feel a little bit helpless, small and insignificant. From my Christian perspective, the happy news is that the apocalyptic prerequisites mentioned in the Holy Bible have not been

met. As a matter of fact, although we are now seeing many of the things that were forecasted, they are not necessarily indicators of the end of the age.

At times like these, it is good to have religious faith. Jesus said that not even a sparrow could fall from the sky without God knowing it. He cares for us far more than the birds, and knows us better than we know ourselves. In the Bible, we are told that God even knows the number of hairs on our head. Believing this gives me assurance that nothing will escape God's notice.

While we cannot understand the "whys" of current worldly events, there is much comfort in knowing that nothing is beyond God's control either.



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USF - I Commanding General: Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III
USF - I Senior Public Affairs Officer: Col. Kevin V. Arata
USF - I Senior PA Enlisted Advisor: Sgt. Maj. Sharon Opeka
Command Information Advisor: Renea Everage
Editor: Sgt. TJ Moller
Print Staff: Staff Sgt. Edward Daileg, Sgt. A.M. LaVey, Sgt. Joseph Vine, Spc. Charlene Apatang Mendiola
Layout: Spc. Paul Holston

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as engine oil filters, batteries, fire extinguishers, pesticides, asbestos-containing materials, classified items and other dangerous products. All of these items must be disposed of in accordance with their individual properties.

To accommodate these requirements, numerous sections were developed within the centers based on the specific types of waste. Incinerator, oil filter, metal shredding, and compressed gas cylinder degassing operations are some examples of sections.

Not all waste has to be disposed of; some items can be repurposed, which requires the active support of end-users.

As the transition and transfer of bases to the government of Iraq continue, Alicandro and Banker are reminding bases throughout Iraq that the timely turn-in of waste and excess chemicals will maximize the opportunities for reuse and recycling of the various

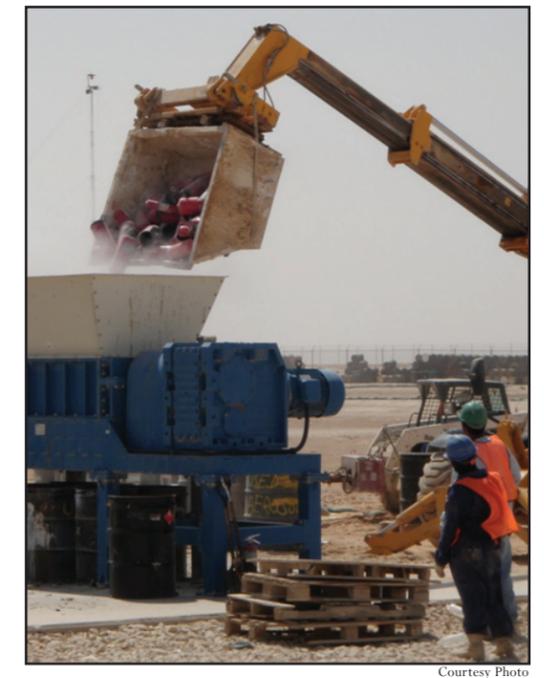
materials.

The treatment centers are providing an example of a responsible way to dispose of hazardous waste, said Banker. They could provide an effective means for Iraq to take steps toward developing their own environmental protection laws and regulations.

Service members can do their part to reduce hazardous waste and improve recycling efforts by ensuring all military-specific items are turned in. Using the proper supply system or supply support activity to turn in excess, unused hazardous material will help as U.S. forces draw down.

"The hazardous waste treatment centers are a cost-effective and responsible solution for treatment and disposal of the waste generated during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn," said Mr. Richard Isaac,

chief of environmental section for United States Forces - Iraq. "The responsible handling and disposal of hazardous waste protects the health and environment of U.S. personnel and the people of Iraq."



Courtesy Photo

Final Women's History Month in Iraq commemorated on Camp Victory



▲ Col. Mindy Williams, senior Marine with the Marine Coordination Element - Iraq conducted the opening remarks for the Women's History Month observance ceremony.

► Justice Praise performed a praise dance during the Women's History Month observance on Camp Victory, Iraq, March 24. The Equal Opportunity office hosted this event to commemorate the women in the armed forces.

By Charlene Apatang Mendiola
USF-I Public Affairs



The 25th Infantry Division jazz band performed for the Women's History Month observance ceremony as part of their tribute to the women in the military.

From prehistoric gatherers to middle-aged domesticators, women in the past have made it possible for the trend of females in a support role to steer in a different direction. A direction which leads women of the 21st century to succeed significantly in today's society.

March is National Women's History Month, a time set aside to honor the women who have impacted our lives one way or another.

'Our History is our Strength,' is this year's theme. As this celebration is observed nation-wide, service members on Victory Base Complex lead a different approach on March 24, by commemorating women in the military.

The United States Forces – Iraq

equal opportunity team hosted this celebration. "We wanted to recognize all the women who have contributed greatly to our successes in the military or in general," said Master Sgt. Ronnie Blount, an equal opportunity senior advisor with the USF-I EO office.

A team of volunteers worked together with the EO office to ensure the success of this event.

"The team wanted to make this celebration different," Blount said. "Take it away from the traditional observance, to a more distinct occasion by incorporating a variety of activities."

The activities included an array of photo displays of women warriors of different ethnicities, services, and accomplishments, a 4-mile run, a 90-minute ceremony that involved the

25th Infantry Division jazz band, a praise dance, poetry and special tribute speeches.

"Volunteering my time is always a pleasure, most especially if it is to use my God-given talent of poetry for a good cause," said Robert Bob aka Scott Free, a spoken-word artist and circuit action specialist with Five Rivers Co. "I stood up there and spoke words that expressed my appreciation for women all over for their struggles and sacrifices."

Women have accomplished so much dating back to World War I, said Sgt. Nickquawana Stephenson, a supply sergeant with Headquarters Support Company, XVIII Airborne Corps. "So when the military recognizes simple things like this, it is a remarkable feeling."

"As a female Soldier, I feel honored for being part of the great things we

do," Stephenson said. "And I wanted to recognize my leader for her mentorship and support. I appreciate what she has done for me, which made me a better person today."

"I think that it is a great thing that we honor women for their accomplishments," said Pfc. Jon Jerry, a military police officer with the 192nd MP Detachment. "Many times, their achievements go unnoticed or overlooked because of the stigma that women have in the military and in society."

This event has encouraged others to participate in the tribute to all women. For a few it can be more personal than others.

"Every day I pay tribute to my mother. She is my hero and my mentor," said Master Sgt. Patrina Soto, a senior enlisted advisor with USF-I J8. "It was an

opportune time to acknowledge her for her magnificent triumphs as a woman. I am a reflection of her accomplishments."

As the reduction in forces continues toward a final departure, service members and civilians on Victory Base Complex participated in what will be the last Women's History Month observance in Iraq.

"This is a memorable event because of the contributions and participation of everyone who played a role in putting this together," Blount said. "The team's efforts were excellent and professional."

As one of many successful events in Iraq, remember that you were a part of this special one, Free said. "All women are important and significant."

"Just take one moment of your time to tell a woman that she is appreciated," Jerry said, echoing the sentiment.



Photo by Spc. Paul Holston

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Joshua Cormier, an aviator with Co. B, 1-207th Aviation Regiment, crosses the finish line as he finishes the four-mile Women's History Month observance run, March 20, on Camp Victory.

UNSUNG HERO

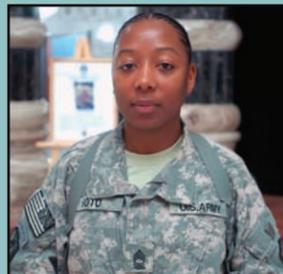


Sgt. Joseph Shull is recognized as this week's Unsung Hero and received a certificate of achievement from Brig. Gen. Michael X. Garrett, deputy chief of staff, United States Forces - Iraq, at Al Faw Palace, March 25.

Shull received the certificate for outstanding planning and execution in assistance of unit movement officer duties and displayed the confidence needed to face the tough challenge of disseminating much-anticipated cargo.

VICTORY VOICES

What does leadership mean to you?



"Leadership to me is putting my gratitude in action for all the women before me."

**Master Sgt.
Patrino Soto**

USF-I J-8 Senior Enlisted Advisor
Co. B, XVIII Airborne Corps



"Leadership is someone that's easy going, in charge, who carries themselves in a professional manner."

**Spc.
Michael Bridges**

Route Clearance Analyst
717th Explosive Hazard Team



"Leadership to me is the ability to lead troops, give them moral guidance and set the example."

**Spc.
John Koll**

USF-I Command Group PSD
HSC, XVIII Airborne Corps



"Leadership means to lead, putting a positive impact on everyone and being a mentor."

**Staff Sgt.
Willie McIntosh**

Aviation Operations Specialist
Co A., XVIII Airborne Corps

The USF-I Equal Opportunity and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office:

Ask the EO

By Sgt. 1st Class Michael Christian
USF-I Equal Opportunity Office

Can I speak my native language while on duty?

This is a question that the equal opportunity office is often asked. Here is the bottom line up front: English is the operational language of the U.S. armed forces. Everyone must be able to understand the content and meaning of operational communications.

What exactly does this mean? Here's an example to illustrate:

Three service members are trying to put up a tent and two of them are speaking Italian when relaying instructions for raising the tent. The third service member doesn't speak Italian and has no idea what the other two are trying to convey. This is an operational communication breakdown.

In that example, English must be used as the operational communication option. Army Regulation 600-20 states that Soldiers must maintain sufficient proficiency in English to perform their military duties.

What if every Soldier involved with the tent-raising scenario spoke Italian? The regulation continues stating that commanders may not require Soldiers to use English unless such use is clearly necessary and proper for the performance of military functions. Also, commanders may not require the use of English for personal communications that are unrelated to military functions.

If you have a situation about which you are unclear, just ask a member of your EO team!

VBC Facility Operating Hours

Sports Oasis DFAC
Breakfast 5:00 - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Dinner 5 - 8:30 p.m.
Midnight chow 11:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.
Sandwich bar open 24 hours
Sunday brunch 7:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Education Center
8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Camp Liberty Post Exchange
8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Camp Victory Post Exchange
8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

SFC Paul Smith Gym
Open 24 Hours

Victory Main Post Office
Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Saturday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

USF-I Unit Mail Room
Customer Services/Mail Call
Daily 3 - 6 p.m.

Al Faw Palace Post Office
Wednesday and Sunday
12:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Golby TMC Sick Call
Mon. Wed. Thur. Fri.
8:30 - 10:30 a.m. & 3 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Tues. and Sat. 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.
Sunday - emergency only

Mental Health Clinic
Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. - noon

Pharmacy
Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon;
1 - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon

Websites

Check it out:

USF-I Web pages
www.usf-iraq.com
www.flickr.com/photos/mnfiraq
www.twitter.com/USForcesIraq
www.youtube.com/USFIraq

Facebook
United States Forces-Iraq
U.S. Army
XVIII Airborne Corps
Fort Bragg

SAPR Spotlight



April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. One sexual assault is one too many...it's time to get involved!

On April 1st, walk with Team USF-I to raise awareness for the prevention of sexual assault. This walk is not just an awareness raising effort; it's also a tool to educate service members. The rally point is the Victory Main Stage at 6:30 p.m.

Along the walk route, participants will witness a series of vignettes designed to provoke thought, emotion, and most importantly, raise awareness and promote involvement.

Get involved; engaging bystanders is the key to success when trying to prevent sexual assault. Through awareness and education, an environment is created in which sexual assault, and the attitudes that promote it, are not tolerated.

Call the USF-I Deployed Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (DSARC) at 485-5085 or 435-2235 for help. Army members should seek assistance with their Unit Victim Advocate (UVA) or DSARC.

TF SAFE program reduces electrical incidents Iraq-wide

By Sgt. TJ Moller
USF-I Public Affairs

Making that morning pot of coffee, watching the news and checking your e-mail are things most of us do on a daily basis that require electrical power. Task Force Safety Actions for Fires and Electricity was created to ensure electrical safety is always on the minds of service members deployed to Iraq.

TF SAFE's mission statement declares that it will, through immediate and long-term measures, significantly reduce the number of fire and electrical incidents throughout the theater in order to improve the safety of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and civilians.

The goal of TF SAFE is to provide electrical and fire safety awareness throughout the Iraq joint operations area, said Maj. William Corey, chief, Task Force SAFE, United States Forces-Iraq.

"Over the last seven years we have had several electrical fatalities and to bring those numbers down we had to implement TF SAFE," said Minnick Eargle, safety manager, USF-I. "Bringing this program on board has brought the number of electrical fires down as well."

"We track all of the electrical and fire-related incidents in theater," said Sheldon Longnecker, TF SAFE theater fire chief, USF-I. There used to be about thirty-five fires a week and that has been reduced to one or two, he said. "The program has affected the IJOA quite well."

A large portion of the TF SAFE operation is providing power supplies and conducting electrical safety assessments on facilities.

Handing out free power strips and proper adapters have reduced electrical fires, said Longnecker.

Initially, the priority was buildings with water or latrine functions, said Eargle. Then it developed into going through offices, trailers and compartmentalized housing units.

As electrical issues within the lodging areas surfaced, they have been researched and resolved.

"Florescent lights were a major problem when we first got here," said Longnecker. The magnetic ballasts were causing fires. Measures were taken to stop the installation of those ballasts and fires have been reduced.

Flyers, commercials, television spots and informational briefs are all used to get the messages out.



Leslie Sims, a master electrician with Versar International, a company supporting the Task Force Safety Actions for Fires and Electricity mission, performs a routine safety inspection on an electrical distribution panel, Camp Liberty, Iraq.

Another method to get the awareness message out is a monthly class held on Camp Liberty. The class covers topics of electrical safety, shock reporting and inspections.

"We are out there and available, if needed. If you have any issues or anything you suspect is a problem in your CHU or work area, make sure you let us know," said Longnecker. "We'll do the investigation; we don't care how small or large the issue is."

"We get a lot of static reports and that's fine with us. That tells us that our awareness program is getting out," said Longnecker. "We would rather get ten static reports every month than to have someone get shocked, not tell anyone, then have the next person get electrocuted."

"We do all shock investigations no matter how minor," said Corey.

TF SAFE's mission is to make sure that electrical and fire safety standards are adhered to and awareness reaches everyone in theater.

"Take the time to be conscience about the electrical hazards that may be present in your facility," said Eargle. "If you're not sure, contact Task Force SAFE, the mayor cell or any local safety office. They can assist in getting someone out there to look at it."



David Valen, an electrical engineer with the Department of Defense and master electrician Leslie Sims, a contractor with Versar International, examine electrical switches to ensure their authenticity as part of a routine electrical safety inspection, Camp Liberty, Iraq.