



Asian Pacific American Heritage Month celebrated in Iraq



Photo by Sgt. Joseph A. Vine/USF-I PAO

Fijian contractors perform one of their cultural slap dances during the Asian Pacific American Heritage Month capstone event in the Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory, Iraq, May 21. For story and more photos see Pages 4-5.

USF-I Soldiers attend OCS board

Story and photos by Sgt. Joseph A. Vine
USF-I Public Affairs

Officers are the Army's leaders. They make the decisions that can impact Soldiers lives on and off the battlefield.

Thirteen potential candidates for Officer Candidate School took their first steps in becoming Army leaders May 25, during a structured local board.

"This board will make the recommendation that a candidate get selected to go to OCS," said Maj. Neil Travis Parks, president of the OCS board and

deputy targeting and plans officer with the United States Forces – Iraq Joint Fires Cell. "We are not the final authority. The candidate's packet will go to the Human Resources Command where it will review the packet further and make the final decision on whether the Soldier is accepted."

"This is an important responsibility," he said. "We are picking future leaders in the United States Army. It's not an easy task and not one that I take lightly."

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U.S., Iraqi sergeants major discuss training Iraqi NCO corps

Story and photos by Sgt. TJ Moller
USF-I Public Affairs

Command Sgt. Maj. Earl L. Rice, senior enlisted advisor to the deputy commanding general for operations, United States Forces - Iraq and commander, XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg, N.C., met with Iraqi army Command Sgt. Maj. Nasser Abd Hasan Johai, senior enlisted advisor, 12th Iraq Army Division, May 19, to discuss military training standards and upcoming events.

Throughout the day Rice and Johai discussed military strategy, promotions within the Iraqi army, security force training and the Iraqi army noncommissioned officer corps.

The meeting with the command sergeant major of the 12th Iraqi Army Division was one step toward USF-I's initiative to strengthen the Iraqi security force, said Rice.

"We partner with the Iraqi security forces, and that's to include the Iraqi army, the Iraqi police, the federal police and the border police, to be able to help to get them to a level where they can provide internal and external defense for their country," said Rice.

The IA has gotten stronger but

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Chaplain's Corner

Remembering their sacrifice and our responsibility

By Chaplain (Maj.) Jack Stumme
USF-I Training and Operations Chaplain

Memorial Day is coming and no doubt everyone has his own idea of how he should spend the day. For some, it is a day to picnic and acknowledge the beginning of summer. For others it is a time to visit family graves. Moreover, for others it is a day to remember and honor those who have died and served our country.

No one knows for sure the actual beginning of Memorial Day. Some have said it was originally called Decoration Day. There are those who believe it was started by Southern ladies who decorated the graves of Confederate soldiers. No matter who started this observance, it is one that ought to be near and dear to the hearts of

everyone who puts on the uniform or supports those who do.

If we are truly to honor their sacrifice then we ought to remember what they died to preserve. They died to protect the Constitution that affords us opportunities like in no other country. They gave their lives to ensure that each one of us could practice our faith in whatever manner we see fit. They fought and died so that we and our children could have freedom.

When we remember that, we will come to grips with the reality that what they died to preserve, we have the responsibility to maintain. Our tribute to their memory is more than just a day: it ought to be a way of life. They showed the greatest love possible. Jesus said in John 15:13, "Greater love has no

one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." They laid down their lives for the next generation, whom they would never know, but whom they would expect to preserve the most prized idea ever given to humankind this side of heaven: freedom.

As you observe Memorial Day 2011, and honor their sacrifice, also remember that they sacrificed so that you and I would continue in their footsteps. It is now our responsibility to ensure the truth is never lost "... that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Let us be true to our calling and to the memory of their sacrifice.

SAPR Spotlight



BE AWARE- Watch For Signs That Trouble May Be Coming:

- The Other Person Won't Stop When You Say "NO!"
- He or She Threatens to Hurt You
- He or She Physically Restrains You
- The Person Threatens To- or Uses a Weapon
- He or She Tries to Have Sex With You When You Are Too Drunk or Medicated to Say "NO!"
- The Person Suggests Something Bad May Happen If You Don't Give In

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.



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The board members, who are charged with making the decision that could affect the lives of the thirteen candidates, consisted of a board president and three board members in the ranks of captain or higher.

"I know what these guys are going through; it's very competitive," said Capt. Jared DeMello, a basing officer for USF-I engineering directorate who went through the OCS board as a civilian. "It's important to give them that same opportunity to go on to succeed and do what they want to do."

For the Soldiers that went through the board, some were taken aback at how different it was from an enlisted promotion or Soldier of the Month board.

"It was more of a job interview than a promotion board," said Sgt. Aaron Starr Byron, a potential candidate for OCS and a human intelligence collector with Company B, Task Force Dragon, USF-I analysis and production directorate. "You're not getting up in front of a line of first sergeants; that intense structure wasn't there."

"It wasn't as stressful as I thought," said Spc. Radnee A. Anib, a potential candidate for OCS and a driver for the senior enlisted advisor to the deputy-commanding general of

operations, USF-I. "It was a very relaxing environment."

"The board is more about your personality and you as a person," said DeMello. "Not everybody wants to be or should be an officer, but everyone that does and are qualified, should be given the opportunity and set up for success."

Both Byron and Anib have been accepted by the board to have their packets sent to HRC, and consider it a privilege just to get the chance to apply.

"Applying to OCS is a huge step," said Byron. "It's something I've planned on doing for quite a while. I see this as a great way to move my career forward."

"This is the next step for my career in the military and I'm accomplishing one of the goals that I set for myself," said Anib. "This will put me in the position that I want to be, which is to take care of Soldiers."

Anib said he feels there are many qualified Soldiers who are sitting on their hands and not taking the initiative when it comes to applying to OCS.

"I hear a lot of people saying, 'I want to be an officer,' but those are the ones who need to put their plans into action and go through with it," he said. "Speak less and do more."

HEAT STRESS TIPS

Heat Stroke:

Heat Stroke is a serious condition that urgently requires medical attention. Symptoms include diminished or absent sweating, which makes the skin hot and dry. Body temperature is very high - 106 F and rising - and if uncontrolled may lead to delirium, convulsions, coma, and even death.

First Aid - THIS IS AN EMERGENCY!

Brain damage and death are possible. Douse the body continuously with a cool liquid and summon medical aid immediately.

Heat Exhaustion:

Heat Exhaustion may result from physical exertion in hot environments. Symptoms may include profuse sweating, weakness, paleness of the skin, rapid pulse, dizziness, nausea, headache, vomiting, and unconsciousness. The skin is cool and clammy with sweat.

Body temperature may be normal or subnormal
First Aid - Rest in the shade or cool place. Drink plenty of water (preferred) or electrolyte fluids and call for medical attention.

Prevention:

Drink up to one quart of water per hour.
Take a break every 10 minutes in a cooler environment.
Be aware of the effect of medications that can increase the risk of heat stress.
Educate everyone on the signs and symptoms of heat injuries.

Asians, Pacific Islanders showcase culture, tradition

Story by Spc. Charlene Apatang Mendiola
USF-I Public Affairs

The United States Forces – Iraq equal opportunity office hosted a capstone showcase for deployed service members to celebrate the culture, traditions, and history of Asian and Pacific Islanders in the Al Faw Palace, May 21.

The United States celebrates the contributions and accomplishments of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans every May. This year's theme is diversity, leadership, empowerment and beyond.

More than 80 volunteers including service members, contractors and Department of Defense civilians participated in the 90-minute event.

The wide array of cultural dances, chants, flags, costumes and food tastings were shared as a form of education and awareness for all who attended the showcase.

The Asian Pacific American Heritage month designation encompasses over 50 ethnic groups representing a vast array of languages and cultures. These groups include Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Indian, Laotian, Cambodian, Hmong, Thai, Pakistani, Samoan, Guamanian and other smaller groups within the Asia-Pacific region.



Photo by Sgt. Joseph A. Vine/USF-I PAO
Toa O Polynesia male dancers perform a skit depicting the voyage of a young warrior through the Pacific Islands in search of his identity during the Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.



Photo by Sgt. Joseph A. Vine/USF-I PAO
Petty Officer 2nd Class David SanLuis, an aviation maintenance administration with USF-I resource management office (Left), Spc. Charlene Mendiola, a print journalist with USF-I public affairs (Center), Master Sgt. Jeffrey Joven, noncommissioned officer-in-charge with Advise and Assist Brigade (Right), perform a cultural dance from the island of Guam that showcases the warmth and hospitality of its people and culture.

Photo by Sgt. Joseph A. Vine/USF-I PAO
Fijian contractors perform one of their cultural slap dance during the Asian Pacific American Heritage Month capstone event at the Al Faw Palace, May 21.



Photo by Sgt. Joseph A. Vine/USF-I PAO
▲Spc. Puakeiluae Westbrooks, an administration specialist with Headquarters Support Company, Headquarters Headquarters Battalion, 25th ID, performs the 'Kahiko' dance which tells about the beauty of the Island of Oahu, Hawaii during the Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.



Photo by Spc. Paul Holston/USF-I PAO
Pfc. Juan Dominguez, with 25th Infantry Division performs the 'Haka' slap dance as part of the Samoan island cultural dance.



Photo by Sgt. Joseph A. Vine/USF-I PAO
Toa O Polynesia female dancers perform the 'Tulei' dance, a welcome dance traditionally for visitors entering into the island of Saipan.



Photo by Sgt. Joseph A. Vine/USF-I PAO

►Filipino contractors perform a Spanish and Filipino dance. The steps and music portrayed the charms and celebratory festival within their tradition.

UNSUNG HERO



Spc. Joshua Epley 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, May 27.

Epley received the certificate for his outstanding performance as a team member of the Deputy Commanding General for Support international zone personal security detail team.

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there is still a lot of work that needs to be done, said Johai. "We want to take this opportunity to fix our army and make it stronger."

Johai expressed his worries for the future as the U.S. forces leave, but was reassured by Rice that their training and motivation will get them through this time in Iraq's history.

"We have been working with the 12th IA along with the rest of the divisions to assist them in professionalizing their army through their education system and through their military training," said Rice.

Taking the time to strengthen the NCO corps, will in turn, strengthen the Iraqi army, said Rice.

"SGM Nasser is one of the strong supporters of the noncommissioned officer education school system and empowering noncommissioned officers," said Rice. "His chain of command has empowered him to be able to lead training to make a difference within his organization."

"We have to take some time to develop that NCO," said Rice. "We have to get him to the proper schooling."

Evaluating soldiers and ensuring that the right soldiers or sergeants are being sent to the appropriate courses is one step in the right direction.



Command Sgt. Maj. Earl L. Rice, senior enlisted advisor to the deputy commanding general for operations, United States Forces - Iraq, speaks with Iraqi Army Command Sgt. Maj. Nasser Abd Hasan Johai, senior enlisted advisor, 12th Iraqi Army Division, during a meeting about noncommissioned officer training and standards in Kirkuk, Iraq, May 19.

"I think it's a good idea," said Johai. "When we have a corporal, we need to make sure he is qualified to become a sergeant."

Being a sergeant and wearing the rank of sergeant are two different things, said Johai.

An NCO evaluation process will be implemented within the IA in order to ensure that the right people are wearing the right rank and have the appropriate responsibilities.

"The NCOs who have been empowered by their commanders have demonstrated that they are ready to take their organization to the next level," said Rice.

"None of this has been easy," said

Rice as he addressed Johai. "You have been able to do this while at war. Now we are going to take advantage of this opportunity and make sure you are better trained and better equipped, and you will be able to take care of the security of Iraq."

Continued partnered training and evaluations along with motivation will help the Iraqi security forces move forward, said Rice.

"I have told my soldiers that one thousand steps starts with the first step," said Johai. "We have quickly moved forward, more than I thought we would. We have an army, and equipment. We are strong and God willing, we will continue and never stop."

VICTORY VOICES

Who are you honoring this Memorial Day?



"Matthew Huck, my brother serving in Afghanistan on his fourth deployment."

Spc.
Jason Davis
Admin/Information Management
Officer
Joint Fire Cell, USF-I



"My grandfather, Eugene H. Bryant, a Vietnam veteran."

Spc.
Kendra R. Williams
Admin Assistant
USF-I DCG-O



"I would just like to give it to all the fallen Soldiers, their families and also to the people supporting our mission now."

Spc.
Dannie Jones
Admin
J3, USF-I



"I'll be honoring my uncle Jim, U.S. Marine Corps, and father-in-law, Homer Haines, U.S. Army."

Col.
Jeff Lanning
Chief of Assessments
J5, USF-I

RUNNING BY THE BOOK: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW IF YOU PLAN TO RUN ON VICTORY BASE COMPLEX

- Individual runners and informal running groups will use sidewalks and road shoulders when available.
- Runners will make every effort not to force vehicular traffic to cross traffic lanes.
- Runners will face traffic when jogging.
- All runners will wear appropriate reflective clothing, vests, or belts at all times and carry personal identification at all times.
- Informal running groups will be no larger than four people and will run in a column not abreast.

REMEMBER, MAINTAIN SITUATIONAL AWARENESS AND MAKE SURE YOU CAN BE SEEN.
FOR MORE SAFETY INFORMATION CONTACT THE USF-I SAFETY OFFICE AT 485-2472

AROUND IRAQ



Pfc. Jose Ramos, a personal security detail member for Command Sgt. Maj. Earl L. Rice, the senior enlisted advisor to the United States Forces - Iraq deputy commanding general for operations, pulls security during Rice's visit to United States Division-South bases May 30. Ramos, an infantryman and native of River Side, Calif., is on his first deployment in Iraq with Headquarters Support Company, Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, XVIII Airborne Corps. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Paul Holston/USF-I PAO)



Spc. Grayling Murdock, an MP with the 938th Military Police Detachment, deflects the knife wielding Air Force Staff Sgt. Charles Cole during a Western martial arts class in the multi-purpose room, Camp Victory, Iraq. The instructors of the class teach techniques that date back to medieval times during the 1400s. The class is held every Monday and Friday at 7:30 pm. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Joseph A. Vine/USF-I PAO)



Volunteers and runners display their t-shirts as part of the shadow 5k "Girls on the Run" fun, sponsored by Maj. Lori Walowsky, planner for United States Forces - Iraq plans directorate, May 15 on Camp Victory, Iraq. "Girls on the Run" is a non-profit program that works to encourage pre-teen girls to develop self-respect and healthy lifestyles through participation in running programs. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. TJ Moller/USF-I PAO)



U.S. service members and civilians took part in a "24 hours in Baghdad" run on Camp Victory, Iraq, May 21. The shadow run involved running one mile every hour on the hour, which totaled up to 24 miles. The money raised by the run will be donated to the Wounded Warrior Project.

24 hours, 24 miles: Shadow run contributes to Wounded Warriors

Story and photo by Spc. Paul Holston
USF-I Public Affairs

Twenty-three U.S. service members and civilians participated in a "24 hours in Baghdad" run on Camp Victory, Iraq, May 21.

The run, sponsored by Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Miner, a personal security detail team leader with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team, raised money for a CrossFit team he is a part of in Boise, Idaho, as well as the Wounded Warrior Project.

The Wounded Warrior Project is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to honor and empower wounded warriors. WWP serves to raise awareness, enlist the public's aid for the needs of severely injured service members, and provides unique, direct programs and services to meet their needs.

"We started at 7 a.m. and every hour

on the hour we did a one mile run," said Miner. "In between the hours was our break period and we continued up into the following morning, finishing at 6 a.m., which equals 24 miles in total."

Miner said running for a great cause such as WWP made it very rewarding for the personnel who participated in the event.

Fire Lt. Steven DelleCroce, a firefighter with the South Victory Fire Department, had a couple of friends who were injured in Afghanistan and Iraq when he was here in Iraq back in 2003-2005, and felt an obligation to run in their honor.

With temperatures in the 100s, fatigue played a large factor throughout the day.

"Weather was definitely the worst part" said DelleCroce. "Just having to run through fatigue was a challenge, but we got through it."

Maj. Vincent M. Antunez, a theater physician assistant consultant with United

States Forces - Iraq Surgeon's Office, was a part of the run, and has treated countless Soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"I know the value of the Wounded Warrior Project firsthand from seeing them on the battlefield, through all stages of their rehabilitation," he said.

Antunez said that anything that he could do for the wounded warriors, he would. To him, the run was a way to give back and help them out even more, as some of those Soldiers are ones that he took care of during recent deployments.

This was the first run of its kind at Camp Victory, and the participants finished out their run as the sun began to rise.

Miner said his CrossFit team back in Idaho was doing the exact same run and because of that, by bringing a shadow run over to Iraq was just like being there. "I didn't think there would be this many people participating, so overall, it was pretty awesome."