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Team Spartan legacy of IA NCOs

Major William Reeves
STT, 1st Bn., 12th Cav. Regt.

Team Spartan’s pride shows in the professional corps of noncommissioned officer instructors in the 10th Iraqi Army Division Headquarters, making these graduates the team’s key deployment accomplishment.

The Stability Transition Team non-commissioned officer in charge, Sgt. 1st Class Jose Mortenson, planned, coordinated, executed, and assessed a comprehensive program. He established an internal set of trainers for the division by taking a handpicked group of NCOs and certifying them as enduring unit instructors.

“NCOs are the primary trainers of Soldiers in most armies, and the IA is no exception.” said Mortenson. While United States Forces-Iraq instructors have been providing training assistance as part of the advise, train, and assist

mission, Spartan set conditions for IA divisions to establish their own permanent internal capability to conduct tactical level training once USF-I depart the country.

Spartan assisted the IA with the essential capability to conduct external defense, and Sgt. 1st Class Mortenson’s course focused on team, squad, and platoon tactics for offensive and defensive operations.

They also trained the IA on first aid, direct fire planning, dismounted tactical movement, improvised explosive device awareness and exploitation, basic rifle marksmanship and range operations, as well as platoon-level operations focusing on ambush, raid, defense, and attack tactics.

Organized under the supervision of the 10th IA Division G-7 training section, this group of NCO instructors augmented the collective training at Tadreeb al Shamil (TaS), and served as mobile training teams deployable to any of the 10th division’s infantry brigades stationed across three provinces.

This is an enduring system that forms the foundation for a professional army, and will ensure the IA’s ability to continue to train their



Photo by Maj. William Reeves

Iraqi Army Soldiers train on basic rifle marksmanship as Sgt. 1st Class Mortenson supervises the exercise.

Soldiers year round. The course has produced 75 instructors who serve at TaS without USF-I supervision.

Col. Ronald McNamara, team Spartan chief, said, “The backbone of the U.S. Army is clearly the professional corps of NCOs so the most effective way to make the Iraqi Army successful, is to build that NCO strength into their formations.”

To further establish an enduring capability, three of the top graduates of this course received advanced training and are now also certified as Division Master Instructors, to be held at the G7 level to continue the training mission after the departure of USF-I.

Sgt. 1st Class Mortenson’s efforts created enormous potential for the 10th IA Div. to continue to train their current and future Soldiers on the critical tasks required to fight and win on future battlefields, and represents the very best of what the STT’s mission in Iraq has to offer.



Photo by Maj. William Reeves

Iraqi Army Soldiers receive graduation certificates for their training.

Forward Support Company dominates birthday competition

2nd Lt. Stuart White
6th Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt.

To celebrate the recent birthday of the 9th Cavalry Regiment, the Soldiers and officers from 6th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division conducted a rigorous platoon challenge on Contingency Operating Base Delta.

The competition was designed to physically and mentally challenge each Soldier and entice other squadrons of the regiment to join in the years to come.

The race began with a marksmanship range at 5 a.m., where Soldiers fired the M-9 pistol and the M-4 rifle.

Teams ran a 4,500-meter course that included buddy carries, tire flips, humvee pull, movement-to-contact and ended with a quiz on the history of the 9th Cav. Regt. Each task had to be performed in a timely manner, to standard.

“The competition ran smoothly, and the competitors gave it their utmost despite the early morning and the painstaking events,” said 2nd Lt. Jefferson Kramer, the officer in charge of the competition with Headquarters and

Headquarters Troop, 6th Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt., and a native of New Haven, Conn.

The competitors pushed, pulled, ran and shot with temperatures reaching 110 degrees by the end of the day. The events were extremely taxing on even the most physically fit Soldiers.

“We put a good team together, and I think we did a good job of working together and pulling through this thing. It definitely wasn’t easy. We are very proud of our effort,” said Staff Sgt. Thomas Arnold of D Forward Support Co., and an Athens, Ga. native.

The competition was fierce, but in the end, only one team came out on top.

D Forward Support Co., Dominators won the competition, finishing five minutes faster than the other teams. Though the team did not have the best score on every event, they were propelled into first place by completing the course five minutes faster than the nearest competitor.

“We knew we were the only team that wasn’t a cavalry MOS, so we knew we had something to prove to everyone,” said Sgt. 1st Class Deunte Stringfellow, with D Forward Support Co.



Photo by Spc. Nathan Franco

Spc. Nicholas Binkley of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, and a Rome, Ga. native provides “security” for Lt. Col. Cameron Cantion, commander of 6th Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt., and an Ettrick, Wis. native, while he evaluates a “casualty” during the competition celebrating the regiment’s birthday.



Photo by Spc. Nathan Franco

Soldiers sprint through the competition celebrating the regiment’s birthday.



Photo by Spc. Nathan Franco

Sgt. Nathan Swelfer and 1st Lt. Mark Walczyk of C Troop help carry a casualty during the competition.



Photo by Spc. Nathan Franco

Soldiers in B Troop push forward on a reflexive fire course to assault an objective during the competition celebrating the regiment’s birthday.



Photo by Spc. Sharla Lewis

Vimoto presents a coin to Spc. Michael Howard, a medic with C Medical Co., 215th Bde. Support Bn. 1st Sgt. John Buford looks on.



Photo by Spc. Sharla Lewis

Staff Sgt. Michael Witherow (right), a motor sergeant with B Co., 215th Bde. Support Bn., explains the workings of his maintenance section to Vimoto.

First Team command sergeant major visits COB Adder troopers

Spc. Sharla Lewis
3rd AAB PAO, 1st Cav. Div.

1st Cavalry Division Command Sgt. Maj. Isaia Vimoto visited the division's Soldiers at Contingency Operating Base Adder August 10, as part of a tour of 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade's area of responsibility in southern Iraq.

Vimoto saw the base defense operations center and visitor control center, manned by 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion as well as 215th Brigade Support Battalion's maintenance warehouse and aid station.

Having just taken responsibility for the division in April, this is Vimoto's first visit to the GREYWOLF troopers here and many said they felt privileged to meet him in person.

"It is always good to see your leadership is genuinely concerned for their subordinates," said 1st Sgt. Scott Dawson, of B Field Maintenance Co., 215th Bde. Support Bn.

"His actions demonstrate his commitment to providing leadership to First Team Soldiers, regardless of where they are located," he said.



Photo by Spc. Sharla Lewis

Vimoto presents a coin to Spc. Emilio Jimenez, with Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 3rd Bde. Special Troops Bn., during a circulation of the VCC.



Photo by Spc. Sharla Lewis

Staff Sgt. Richard Clark, a communications sergeant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion and native of Baton Rouge, La. chats with Vimoto (right) and Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky Wallace.



Photo by Spc. Sharla Lewis

Vimoto (seated) tests out the United Through Reading room at COB Adder's resiliency center while Sgt. 1st Class Derek Bellamy, a master resiliency trainer with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Bn., 82nd Field Artillery Regt., guides a tour of the center.



Photo by 2nd Lt. John Butler

Newly promoted Staff Sgt. William Conn, a section chief and master gunner listens to a speech given by 1st Sgt. Jim Braegelmann.

Delta Company promotions

2nd Lt. John Butler
3rd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt

Delta Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division promoted two of its noncommissioned officers Aug. 1, at Contingency Operating Station Garry Owen, Iraq. Staff Sgt. William Skillings a tanker and platoon sergeant was promoted to Sgt. 1st Class, and Sgt. William Conn, a section chief and master gunner was promoted to the rank of Staff Sgt. Both NCOs continue to make significant contributions to their company and Task Force. For Conn, having his former platoon sergeant, now 1st Sgt. Jim Braegelmann there to promote him added to the significance of his promotion.



Photo by 2nd Lt. John Butler

Newly promoted Sgt. 1st Class William Skillings, a tanker platoon sergeant with his platoon leader 1st Lt. Mike Benson.



Dark Knight Company rodeo

1st Lt. Michael Escalera ADC, 215th Bde., Support Bn.

Alpha Distribution Company, 215th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division conducted its first ever company rodeo Aug. 6 and 7, at Contingency Operating Base Basrah, Iraq. The training schedule consisted of three major events: Motor Pool Mayhem, COB Basrah Mission and Kellogg Brown and Root (KBR) recovery. The purpose of the training was to give the Soldiers an opportunity to enhance their skills in a safe yet competitive environment. Motor Pool Mayhem was an obstacle course which tested ground guiding skills and how well the teams tied down their loads. The COB Basra Mission challenge involved conducting a hasty (not a lot of time for planning and execution) recovery as well as a medical evacuation. The KBR Recovery challenge was to conduct a standard recovery mission. There were two teams participating; Team Wolfpack won with an overall time for all three challenges of twelve hours and eleven minutes.



Photo by 1st Lt. Michael Escalera

Staff Sgt. John Sapp, a Killeen, Texas native, assesses Soldiers ground guiding and parking skills during the Motor Pool Mayhem training exercise.



Photo by 1st Lt. Michael Escalera

Cpt. Vernie Param a native of Columbia, S.C. and the commander of A Co. evaluates his Soldiers as they conduct night mission training.



Photo by 1st Lt. Michael Escalera

Spc. Miram Ballard, a native of Winsted, Conn., evaluates a simulated casualty during the ADC, Company Rodeo night operations.



Photo by 1st Lt. Michael Escalera

Sgt. Antonio Salazar, a native of Laredo, Texas conducts a class on convoy operations during a training exercise.



Photo by 1st Lt. Michael Escalera

Staff Sgt. Cadalia Dornellas, a native of Los Angeles, evaluates the guiding skills of Spc. Andre Bygrave, a Ronceverte, W.Va. native.

Mounted Battle Command on the Move

Sgt. Kelly Byrd
3rd Bde., Special Troops Bn.

The Mounted Battle Command on the Move (MBCOTM) is a new concept used by Company B, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division and is geared toward allowing the commander to perform command and control tasks in a mobile platform. In the past, mobile command centers were effective in accomplishing their missions. However, they lacked the mobile data communications provided by today's MBCOTM, and could not fully support command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence services.

Mobile command centers such as the MBCOTM allow commanders to have a more accurate situational awareness while maintaining communications with the Army wide area network using a variety of satellites. By using such equipment, the MBCOTM provides secure voice over internet protocol (VOIP) and data network coverage without the constraints of cabling. This also allows the commander to make use of applications such as Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2) and the Command Post of the Future (CPOF) thus providing a real time common operating picture in order to effectively accomplish the mission.

While the main command post maintains the entire network structure, and provides tactical information, intelligence, and logistical data related to the area of operations, the mobile command center can be mounted on a variety of vehicle platforms such as a humvee, Bradley, Striker, or any mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicle and taken off post in support of forward positions providing command and control operations on the battlefield. This makes the MBCOTM a versatile and effective asset in any combat situation.

Since it is designed to be mounted on such a variety of vehicle platforms, it can be quickly dismantled and

moved to a different type of platform for various mission requirements. It is more flexible than previous mobile command centers, which were designed for the special purpose Command and Control vehicle (C2V), designated the M4.

The M4 C2V was based on the multiple launch rocket system chassis, but was discontinued after a limited number of units



Photo by 2nd Lt. Bee Vengthisane

Spc. Brian Brown and Spc. Heather Betts building a shelter around the STT to keep the system cool so that it does not overheat.

were produced, making the MBCOTM the primary mobile command center used by the Army. The ability of the MBCOTM to be configured for a variety of vehicles enables the commander to accomplish the mission with added operational security.

Company B network operation's Soldiers assisted in the configuration and initial setup of all communications equipment in the MBCOTM improving the brigade commander's mission capabilities. This includes initialization of the CPOF, FBCB2, Secure VOIP as well as the switches and routers that provide the data flow. Soldiers from the brigade received training on all basic operations and troubleshooting procedures. Due to the diligent training provided by the network operations technicians, the trained Soldiers are ready at a moment's notice to initialize and operate the systems within the MBCOTM for the brigade commander as well as squadron commanders from both 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment.

At any time, Co. B Soldiers are prepared to provide assistance with MBCOTM communication systems. On multiple occasions, the Soldiers have deployed to various provinces within the brigade's area of operations in order to assist with troubleshooting network issues. With their training and assistance, Soldiers on site at these locations have gained an exorbitant amount of knowledge that will continue to benefit them and the brigade well after redeployment.

There are currently numerous MBCOTM units fielded in Iraq and Afghanistan giving commanders a greater advantage on the battlefield. Allowing commanders to perform command and control tasks while on the move enhances our Army's effectiveness in combat operations.



Photo by 2nd Lt. Bee Vengthisane

A Satellite Transportable Terminal (STT) that transmits and receives data for the Mounted Battle Command on the Move (MBCOTM).



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2nd Bn., 82nd Field Artillery Regt.



Photo by Spc. Braden Jensen

The new 1st Cavalry Division, Command Sgt. Maj. Isaia T. Vimoto presenting a division coin to Spc. Ronald Ward a native of Las Vegas, and Spc. Jonathan Whitley a native of Stevensville, Mo.

Command Sgt. Maj. Vimoto patrols with Steel Dragon

Spc. Braden Jensen
2nd Bn., 82nd FA Regt.

The new 1st Cavalry Division, Command Sgt. Maj. Isaia T. Vimoto visited Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq Aug. 10, 2011. Vimoto spoke with the Soldiers from 2nd Platoon, Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division about the significance and progress of Operation New Dawn, as well as giving them words of wisdom compiled from his 29-year career in the Army. Vimoto then accompanied the Soldiers on their patrol through the Steel Dragon Operational Environment.

Even though Vimoto is the highest-ranking noncommissioned officer

in the division, while on mission, he assumed the duties of a dismount, just as any junior-enlisted soldier would. His eagerness to fall into the patrol and play his part in the platoon's operations gave the Soldiers of Bravo Battery a respect for their new Command Sgt. Maj., and the leadership of the 1st Cav. Div. as a whole.

"It was neat seeing the division CSM go from giving advice before the patrol to just becoming a dismount like the rest of the platoon when we headed outside the wire. It gives me all new respect for the CSM." said Staff Sgt. Chad Johnson.

After the patrol, Vimoto thanked the Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, before handing out division coins to deserving Soldiers.