

Marne Focus

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Serving Task Force Marne and MND-Center



Spc. Olanrewaju Akinwunmi

A Soldier with Company A, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division uses the Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment to scan a man's fingerprints in Arab Jabour, southern Baghdad, during Operation Marne Torch.



Soldier keeps his head in the game during firefight.

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R & R extension

The total number of days for leave will increase from 15 to 18 days for servicemembers on 15-month deployments in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom effective July 13, 2007.

This extension is not retroactive for servicemembers who have already taken leave.

The restrictions and provisions of reference (b), (c) and (d) continue to apply for all other aspects of the Central Command R & R program.



Mechanics maintain warriors' wheels.

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Iraqi tips lead to cache, security

Task Force Marne PAO

CAMPVICTORY - Coalition Forces are getting some help in fighting and capturing insurgents from a very reliable source – Iraqis.

Residents fed up with violence plaguing their neighborhoods are revealing al Qaeda-affiliated individuals and terrorists activity in areas patrolled by Coalition Forces.

Several times while conducting patrols in Qarghuli village, Soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, N.Y., have been approached by local residents with information leading to weapons caches and even the capture of one of south Baghdad's most wanted.

On July 6, members of 4th Bn., 31st Inf. Reg., "Polar Bears," were led by a local man to a series of 12 caches and then pointed out the insurgents responsible for the storage sites.

Later on July 12, during another dismounted patrol in the same village, an Iraqi citizen gave

the patrol information that led them to two caches.

"The people of Qarghuli village coming forward to help the Iraqi and Coalition Forces is a positive sign that they are willing to take more responsibility in their own security," said Maj. Kenny Mintz, the 2nd BCT operations officer, who is from San Diego.

The courage Iraqis are showing by approaching Coalition Forces is growing steadily.

Iraqis continued to come forward with information vital to their security in Al-Dhour, a village south of Baghdad.

On July 9, members of Troop C, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) were tipped off with two phone calls that alerted the troop of a cache south of Al-Dhour. Within minutes of locating the cache, a second phone tip came in from a man claiming he had the 2nd BCT's top high value target and delivered the man into coalition custody. The man is allegedly responsible for the

downing of an AH-64 helicopter in April 2006 and to be a leader of an al-Qaeda network.

"All of this was possible because of sources we've developed through local-national engagements and working with the residents of the area," said Capt. Adam Sawyer, Trp. C commander.

Local civilians across the southern belt of Baghdad continue to share in the fight against insurgents in their cities and communities.

An Iraqi provided information to members of Company D, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment attached to 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, that led them to two weapons caches June 17. Eighteen days later another tip led to the discovery of another cache.

"(Informants) are extremely concerned with getting peace to their area and the areas surrounding them," said Capt. Brian Gilbert, Co. D commander of Boise, Idaho. "They just want to make Jisr Diyala a safer place."

The contents of all the caches were destroyed by the explosive ordnance team.


Marne 6 sends

Marne troops press on

The summer months here are known for oppressive heat. The winds make this country like a convection oven to the brave men and women deployed here. In spite of the conditions, Soldiers are pressing on and that is always inspiring to me.

Operation Marne Torch and other operations supporting the clear and hold effort here continues.

Our 2nd and 3rd Brigade Combat Teams along with the Combat Aviation Brigade from the 3rd Infantry Division have had magnificent success on the ground and in the air.

Our 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division and 4th Brigade (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division are in the fight day and night conducting clear and hold operations to rid this area of terrorist safe havens. And our 214th Fires Brigade has expanded battle space east toward Iran.

The 3rd Georgian Brigade joins us and proudly serve as members of the coalition to bring freedom to Iraqis. Freedom that will take hold once the insurgency is defeated.

All of our operations have yielded results for Task Force Marne.

So far, we have interdicted the shipping of explosives and accelerants on the Tigris River. The local population told us that all the boats on the Tigris were being used to transport the tools of terror to Baghdad. We have struck and



**Task Force Marne Commander,
Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch**

destroyed over four dozen boats. We've observed secondary explosives that proved what they told us true.

Our troops have methodically cleared over 1,100 buildings, a task that is fraught with danger but necessary in the whole scheme. In many cases we have been forewarned that buildings were rigged by terrorists beforehand. So, we have struck from the land and sky with precision weapons to keep our troops safe but still accomplish the mission.

We have killed over five dozen of the enemy and taken for detention nearly 250. All of this has come as a result of close cooperation with the Iraqis who are more and more fed up with the al Qaeda thugs on their streets. The same Iraqis have pointed out where IEDs have been placed and this has helped save their lives and ours.

We have located and killed or captured the worst of the worst. Recently a group of people have come forward across our operations area and pointed out the storage areas of insurgent ammunition. We have found ammunition and material that is clearly tied to foreign influ-

All of this has come as a result of close cooperation with the Iraqis who are more and more fed up with the al Qaeda thugs on their streets.

Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch

ences and with them the men who used these tools for violence.

Along with the materials of violence, Iraqis have pointed out the leaders of insurgent groups. We capture these men and move them to areas where they are interrogated. In turn we gain intelligence that helps us to find still others. And all the time we keep careful records that will ensure that these people never pose a threat to America ever again.

So, our Soldiers are doing magnificent things and they will continue to make us proud. Marne Torch continues and other operations are planned. It has been tough and it will remain so.

Be vigilant and fight complacency. Your focus is needed here.

For all our successes there have been dear sacrifices. Our fallen will never be forgotten and their loved ones are always in our prayers.

ROCK OF THE MARNE!

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- 7:30 a.m. (Baghdad)



Spc. Olanrewaju Akinwunmi

Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch (center) meets with Col. Kerry Ferrell (left), commander of 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, and Lt. Col. Kerry Adgie, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, on patrol base Murray.



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2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry)
4th Brigade (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division
3rd Combat Aviation Brigade
214th Fires Brigade
82nd Sustainment Brigade
720th Military Police Battalion
Mobile Unit 3 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Battalion

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Spc. William Hatton

Multi-National Force-Iraq troops re-enlist at Camp Victory on July 4. Of the 600 Soldiers who re-enlisted, 184 represented Task Force Marne.

Hundreds re-enlist on Independence Day

By Spc. William Hatton
and Staff Sgt. Samantha M. Stryker
Task Force Marne PAO

CAMP LIBERTY — When thinking of the 4th of July, fireworks, cookouts and celebrations come to mind.

This year, Soldiers throughout Iraq celebrated by being a part of a massive reenlistment ceremony in honor of the nation's independence.

Among the approximately 600 Soldiers who reenlisted, 184 of them represented Task Force Marne in the ceremony presided by Gen. David H. Petraeus, commanding general of Multi-National Force-Iraq here at the Al Faw palace on Camp Victory.

Soldiers have different reasons for reenlisting, but the decision wasn't difficult for a few Marne Soldiers in particular on this occasion.

"Doing this just seemed like the right thing to do," said Spc. Richard Cheeseman, a cavalry scout with the 5th Squadron, 7th U.S. Cavalry, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. "What can I say, I love my job. Choosing to reenlist was just too easy."

"It really just comes down to a feeling," said Sgt. Zettion Branhon, a human resource specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Inf. Div.

Collectively among all the Soldiers who reenlisted, the total for bonuses was over \$5 million, but for Branhon, reenlisting was more than just for the money.

"Deep down inside, reenlisting was what I felt I was supposed to do," said Branhon of Rocky Mount, N.C.

On such a historical day, Soldiers are being given the opportunity to make history by reenlisting during such a large and memorable ceremony, Branhon said.

"The 4th of July really is a special time," she added.

Although the holiday wasn't the reason for reenlisting,

having the reenlistment on the holiday was nice, Brahnon said.

U.S. servicemembers become U.S. citizens

Thirty-one Soldiers from Task Force Marne officially became U.S. citizens today in a ceremony held at the Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory, Iraq.

These men and women joined the Army either a few months ago or have served for several years. For all of them, today, on Independence Day, begins a new chapter in their lives.

"It is an honor to serve this country that has given me so much," said Sgt. Luis Pena, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

The Columbian-born Soldier said that serving in the Army has always been his dream.

Pena moved to Englewood, N.J., in Sept. 2000. Less than a year later, in Aug. 2001, he joined the Army and became an airborne infantryman serving with the 82nd Airborne Division out of Fort Bragg, N.C. A month after he enlisted, the worst terrorist attack on American soil took place, solidifying his resolve to protect his family and a country he would one day call his home.

After achieving his dream of becoming a Soldier, Pena knew he wanted more, more for himself and his family of four. He wanted to become a U.S. citizen. So today, along with fellow brothers and sisters in arms, Pena pledged his allegiance to America.

"I have always been proud of having fought and served in Iraq and of helping the citizens of Iraq," Pena said. "But today, I am just as proud of being a part of a great country as I am of defending the U.S.," Pena added.

Soldiers chose naturalization for different reasons.

Egyptian-born Spc. Allen Joseph, an interpreter with Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, 3rd

Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, who for nine years has called Bakersfield, Calif., home, wanted to prove something by joining the military and eventually becoming a citizen.

"I wanted to prove to those people who look at those of us who are different, being middle-eastern," Joseph said. "Now I feel I deserve to be (in America) and live the life as any U.S. citizen."

After the ceremony Joseph shared his thoughts about his commitment.

"Ethnically I am still Egyptian, but now I am an American," he said.

Each Soldier took an oath renouncing all allegiances with their country of origin. Though they pledged their allegiance to the United States, each one has already demonstrated fidelity to the 'land of the free' by enlisting in the United States Army and serving in Iraq.

In his speech, Petraeus pointed out the fact that they made the decision to defend a constitution and the laws of a country of which they had no voice. Despite not having the right to even vote, each Soldier was and still is willing to make the ultimate sacrifice.

During the ceremony leaders and guest speakers expressed their admiration for the Soldiers choosing U.S. citizenship. Petraeus mentioned two Soldiers who could not attend the ceremony. In the month of June the Soldiers were killed by insurgent activity while serving in Iraq.

Another guest at the ceremony was Republican Senator of Arizona, John McCain, who personally thanked all the servicemembers for their commitment to the country with a handshake.

The ceremony was a combination of a citizenship and reenlistment ceremony. In total, 168 Soldiers became citizens, 31 of which are assigned to Task Force Marne, while 619 servicemembers reenlisted, 184 of which are assigned to the task force.

Tip leads troops to terrorist

2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) PAO

AL-DHOUR — With two well-timed phone calls, Iraqi civilians made some Soldiers' day July 9.

The first tipster called Troop C, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, N.Y., and alerted them to a cache south of the village of Al-Dhour, south of Baghdad.

The troop responded, located the buried weapons, and was only five minutes into the process of digging them up when they got another call.

A man claimed he had the 2nd BCT's top high-value target and would deliver him to coalition custody.

"All of this was possible because of sources we've developed, through local-national engagements and working with the residents of the area."

Capt. Adam Sawyer
Commander, Troop C

Some of the Soldiers were still able to see the cache from their vantage point — and were surprised to see a civilian pickup truck stop there and begin hastily loading the weapons into the bed of the truck.

They engaged the vehicle with an M-240 machine gun, and the men tried to flee, but the Trp. C Soldiers detained them all — and called an explosive ordnance disposal team to destroy the weapons.

Sawyer, a native of Reading, Penn., was jubilant about the operation.

"All of this was possible because of sources we've developed, through local-national engagements and working with the residents of the area," he said. "It's our work with the people in these areas, our relations with them, paying off."

The primary target is allegedly responsible for shooting down an AH-64 helicopter in April 2006, the abductions of two Soldiers in June 2006, and complex attacks on patrol bases and terrorist acts against both Coalition Forces and Iraqi civilians.

Additionally, he is believed to be the leader of an al Qaeda network, known to prey on the general public through intimidation and murder against those resisting compliance to the AQI demands and decrees.

One of the detainees had been wounded in a previous engagement, and was taken to a coalition hospital for treatment. The other six are being held for further questioning.

The man and Capt. Adam Sawyer, Trp. C commander, agreed on a pickup site.

The Soldiers hastily re-buried the cache and moved out, and when the vehicle arrived, they stopped it and took the most wanted man and two other men into custody.

Some of the Soldiers were still able to see the cache from their vantage point — and were

Soldier uses head in firefight

Story by Spc. Chris McCann
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) PAO

CAMP STRIKER — "I'm one of those guys who believe in leading from the front."

His face is boyish and unassuming, and bears not a trace of the bullet that could've cost him his life. Staff Sgt. Kyle Keenan, of Newark, Ohio, and a scout section leader with the 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), Fort Drum, N.Y., is a lucky man. An Iraqi terrorist shot him at point-blank range with a pistol, and he shrugged it off and fired back.

Keenan said his platoon, from Troop C, 1-89, was preparing for a routine mission the afternoon of July 1 when they had an abrupt change of plan and were called for an immediate air assault into a sparsely populated area southwest of Baghdad. An anonymous tipster said he had just seen two leaders of a local terrorist group in the area.

"We went to the pickup zone at about 2:20 p.m. to get onto two UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters, and by 2:35 we were in the air," he said. "It only took six or seven minutes of flying time."

Often, when getting off a helicopter, Soldiers take a few steps out the door and get down, making a defensive perimeter. This time, he said, they did a "rush," not stopping at all.

"While we were still in the air, we saw two men running away from the target house in track suits — one green, one grayish. The one in green ran north, the other went south, and my section went after the guy in green, because he was closest to us."

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Maj. Web Wright

Staff Sgt. Kyle Keenan, section leader with Troop C, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment points to where a round hit his helmet.

'Hope Rope' keeps Soldiers safe

By Capt. Amanda J. Nalls
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) PAO

CAMP STRIKER — Soldiers serving in Iraq are expected to perform a myriad of tasks while deployed, one of which is guarding the many towers overlooking the patrol bases and forward operating bases.

The troops of 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, N.Y., are no different, and they spend quite a bit of time in the towers, guarding their comrades below in the brigade's area of operations southwest of Baghdad.

The towers, often constructed on-site at these remote locations, are difficult to climb in and out of with the heavy protective gear worn by all Soldiers. The rungs of the ladders are often up to a foot apart, making Soldiers stretch the limits of their capabilities while climbing up to defend their fellow Soldiers inside the wire.

Soldiers in the 210th BSB have teamed up with their maneuver battalion counterparts to assess the difficulties associated with guarding these towers.



Warrant Officer Troy Hope

A Soldier demonstrates the Hope Rope at Patrol Base Shanghai.

Warrant Officer Troy Hope, a native of Brunswick, Ga., who serves as the Company B, 210th BSB allied trades technician, has taken the reins on the project and developed what has affectionately come to be called the "Hope Rope."

The Hope Rope combines a harness traditionally used by vehicle gunners and a length of rope. The rope, attached to rebar inside the tower, allows Soldiers to raise their gear into the tower first, and then climb up, uninhibited by the cumbersome equipment they will

need during their guard shift. Once in the tower, Soldiers wear the harness, allowing them to be safely lowered to the ground if they are injured while in the tower.

"Our section has traveled to the patrol bases that house these towers and developed the best product possible to keep our Soldiers safe," said Hope of his Co. B Soldiers. "I think this new equipment will prevent the broken tailbones and spinal

See **ROPE**, page 10

Joining the Army can be a family tradition

Story and photo by Spc. Chris McCann
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) PAO

CAMP STRIKER — Their mocking and sparring in the dining facility is sometimes fierce, but the love between them is apparent. It's not the bond between Soldiers that's forged in the heat of combat — it's rarer, here in Iraq.

First Sgt. Ricardo Riostirado and Pvt. Bryan Rios are father and son, and lucky enough to be working practically next door to each other, although in different units.

Riostirado, a native of Humacao, Puerto Rico, serves in the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, N.Y. His son, Bryan, works with Troop D, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 10th Aviation Brigade, also out of Fort Drum.

The Army wasn't what Riostirado wanted for his middle child. His eldest daughter, Tonya, is in college, and his youngest is only three.

"He enlisted while I was at the National Training Center," he said. The 2nd BCT spent six weeks at the Fort Irwin, Calif., facility in March and April of 2005. When Riostirado got back, his wife said that Bryan had something to tell him.

It didn't take any words at all — he just slid the pink copies of his contract across the table.

Riostirado was less than pleased, he said, because military service, especially in wartime, can be tough on a Soldier.

"After 15 years of seeing me busting my butt, I know he knew better than to follow along — but he did, all the way to Iraq," he said, laughing. He admitted, though, that he's extremely proud of his son.

"I didn't want to get stuck in (my hometown) Sandy Creek, N.Y., looking for opportunities," Bryan said. "I wanted to do something like helicopter maintenance. ... I already knew about the Army, pretty much knew what to expect, and I knew that if I was lost and needed help, I had someone who would know."



First Sergeant Ricardo Riostirado (right) laughs with son, Pvt. Bryan Rios (left), in front of his office at Camp Striker. The two have overlapping tours together.

His father serving as a first sergeant with the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd BCT, at the time of his enlistment didn't hurt matters, he said; Riostirado helped get Bryan assigned to Fort Drum. Of course, he takes flak for it as well.

"They tease me — I started getting mail here right away, because he gave me the address right away," Bryan said. "And people say 'Oh, you were home-schooled for (advanced individual training).' But it's all in fun."

Riostirado is scheduled to return to the United States in November; Bryan's unit just arrived in Iraq. Their tours will overlap by about four months, so the fifteen-month deployments won't be as long a separation as most Soldiers face.

They are close, as fathers and sons often are.

"I was a single parent," Riostirado said, pointing at his son. "I raised this thing!"

Bryan grudgingly confessed to visiting his father's office every Wednesday when he gets free time. Having his dad around is a help, he added.

"It doesn't seem so far from home and lonely," Bryan said of the situation. A deployment to Iraq — especially the first — can be tough. "It really teaches you not to take things for granted, when you get over here."

Bryan is not sure if he'll make the Army a career like his father has, but loves the work he's doing and says it will give him more experience, no matter what he chooses to do later.



1st Sgt. Ricardo Riostirado

Senator John McCain (left) shakes hands with Sgt. 1st Class Lucius Brown (right), the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) communications security custodian during a visit to Camp Striker, Iraq, July 4. McCain also met with many other Soldiers from the Commando Brigade during his visit.

Airborne mail call boosts outpost morale

Story and photo by
2nd Lt. Elizabeth Lopez
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) PAO

CAMP STRIKER — Fort Drum Soldiers are not just taking to the skies to conduct battle operations, they're using the speed and flexibility of an aircraft to keep their Soldiers equipped and happy.

There are more than forty "Commando Providers," from the 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, N.Y., living at forward locations at any one time. Therefore it becomes the responsibility of the Soldiers remaining at Camp Striker, Iraq, to provide them with the things they need to succeed in their missions, including mail.

It has been dubbed aerial mail drop and the battalion's mail handlers deliver mail and high-priority mechanical parts to their fellow Soldiers out in sector, supporting forward-based units.



Pfc. Shanna-Kay Powell (right), with the 210th BSB situates herself before an aerial mail drop.

"I love doing it, I love everything about it," said Pfc. Shanna-Kay Powell, of Kingston, Jamaica.

"We hope to make it a regular thing," said Powell. "I'm very proud and happy to do it — it makes me feel good."

Each mission generally lasts no more than an hour, but that's long enough for the mail handler to travel to the battle positions and patrol bases

where members of the 210th BSB live and work. Upon arrival, the Soldier is met by a liaison to whom he passes off his cargo of mail and parts.

The aerial missions have a second major benefit. They've not only been effective in improving the Soldiers' morale by decreasing the time it takes to deliver their mail — they've also accelerated the rate in which Commando Providers can repair equipment.

Soldiers spread the word

Story and photo by Sgt. Luis Delgadillo
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU — Psychological operations Soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team dropped leaflets from a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter for villagers in towns in the vicinity of Arab Jabour July 6.

The information on the leaflets included announcements promoting a weapons reward program. Residents can utilize this program to help coalition troops eliminate al Qaeda from Arab Jabour.

Maj. John A. Brock, 2nd BCT information operations officer, says that the intent of the reward program is to gather information that will lead to the seizure of weapons, explosives caches or high value target locations in exchange for monetary compensation or items of equal value.

Brock, of New Orleans, said that people in Arab Jabour can provide information through a tip line.

The program is part of a multifaceted effort taken by 2nd BCT Soldiers to root out al Qaeda resources and eliminate al Qaeda's use of the region as a thoroughfare for weapons into Baghdad.

Other leaflets dropped included curfew notice reminders, the announcement of the capture of 3rd Inf. Div. high-value target, Khalid Husayn Abdullah Al-Juburi, and a warning to residents of Arab Jabour not to use the Tigris river.

Along with an information campaign, Soldiers of the Guardian brigade are also conducting patrols in the region, steadily denying safety to insurgents.

Brock said the focus isn't just on any one individual who might come forward with intelligence, but that the focus of the program is on the entire Arab Jabour community.

"I think there's a lot of good people up there who want a good life," he said.

Though success is not guaranteed, Maj. Daniel Canales, civil affairs officer for the 2nd BCT, says residents in the region are ready to be rid of al Qaeda insurgents.

Canales, who is originally from Point Pleasant, N.J., says the hope in Arab Jabour is that the program mimics the success of similar programs throughout Iraq.

"The key thing there is they've had some false starts before and they need an Iraqi government and a Coalition presence that stays for a while," Canales said.



Staff Sgt. Shawn Wenninger, 2nd BCT, distributes leaflets to residents of Arab Jabour July 6.

Medical personnel help Soldiers stay fit to fight

Story and photo by
Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

ARAB JABOUR — Gerber tools, guns and radios are just some of the tools Soldiers carry to war.

But of all the tools a Soldier brings to the fight, the most important one is their own body.

"You want to keep yourself as fit as possible so that if something happens you will be strong enough to take care of your battle buddy as well as yourself," said Staff Sgt. Carolyn Thompson, Forward Operating Base Kalsu aid station noncommissioned officer in charge.

In Army lingo, the concept is known as being 'fit to fight'.

'Fit to fight', defined by Sgt. 1st Class David Brissett, 2nd Brigade Combat Team medical operations NCOIC, means that Soldiers are physically, medically and mentally prepared to do whatever mission they are tasked to do.

Like the multitude of missions a Soldier may be tasked to do, there are multiple ways Soldiers can adhere to the 'fit to fight' principle.

The first is to maintain a healthy body by engaging in a physical fitness program, Brissett said.

Just as important is getting as much rest, he added. Rest helps restore strength, rebuild muscles and relax joints strained from working out.

Brissett also cautioned Soldiers about the use of dietary supplements in their workouts.

Adverse reactions include increased body temperature and dehydration according to



Spc. Peter Pohwat, Pvt. Tiara Padron, Capt. Eric Dahl (left to right) conduct refresher training while on downtime during sick-call hours.

supplement warning labels.

By eating properly, Soldiers shouldn't need to use supplements, Brissett said.

"A healthy diet is very important; it gives you the energy you need to do the tasks in the duty day."

He recommends Soldiers should eat three balanced meals a day with a mixture of all the basic food groups and increase their water intake.

Thompson cautioned eight glasses a day are not enough in a desert environment. She stressed Soldiers should drink about eight liters of water daily, with Soldiers outside doing heavy work consuming more.

Even Soldiers working inside in a

controlled environment should drink more than normal, Brissett added. No matter where a Soldier works, they should never wait until they feel thirsty to take a drink.

To beat dehydration, nothing tops water.

"Once in a while you can reward yourself (with a soda or other beverage), but it should not be a substitute for drinking water," Brissett said. "The same (thing applies) with Gatorade. It is a good supplement to water that helps restore sodium and potassium levels, but Soldiers should drink it with water."

Soldiers should also be using water for personal hygiene.

"One of the great things we have in the modern Army now is contracted laundry and bath," Brissett said.

Clean uniforms can help prevent the spread of disease. Due to the high temperatures, Soldiers sweat a lot, creating environments for harmful bacteria to grow, especially in the feet, Thompson said.

"Soldiers need to take care of their feet," she said, noting foot infections are one of the major conditions treated at the station.

She said Soldiers should use foot powder and change socks at least twice a day, three times if they sweat a lot.

Soldiers should also be sure to dry their feet completely after showering and sleep without socks to give their feet a chance to air out, Thompson added.

While sleeping, Soldiers should also sleep head to toe, not head to head. This reduces the spread of germs by keeping the adjacent Soldier from breathing directly on the person next to him, she said.

Soldiers not feeling well should go to a medical facility.

Medical facilities such as the aid station and the brigade medical operation section help Soldiers take care of health issues through immunizations, medical screenings, routine doctor care, first aid and sick call hours.

In addition to basic care, the clinic can also take X-rays, electrocardiograms, which check the muscles of the heart, and have a physical therapy ward to help Soldiers rehab injuries and get them back to duty.

The clinic also conducts patient education, providing Soldiers tips and valuable information they can use to keep them 'fit to fight.'

2nd BCT, 3rd ID News Briefs

Operation Four Brothers

ARAB JABOUR – Paratroopers netted numerous detainees and munitions July 6 in Operation Four Brothers.

Paratroopers from Bravo Troop, 1st Battalion, 40th Cavalry Regiment, from Fort Richardson, Alaska, conducted the operation finding caches of weapons, money, cell phones and numerous types of media as well as detaining 13 suspected insurgents. One individual, who was briefly detained and released, agreed to write a sworn statement against other detainees.

During the operation the paratroopers discovered various weapons caches containing three Iranian hand grenades, military type uniforms, and 40 mortar casings ranging from 40 millimeter to 81 millimeter. The munitions were confiscated and turned over to the Iraqi police for destruction.

The paratroopers also found 9,000,000 Iraqi Dinar, the equivalent to \$6,000 in U.S. currency. There were also several items from two different coalition patrol bases that had been stolen. These items included razor wire, ladders and lumber.

The Paratroopers are currently attached to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

Aviation support kills 11 insurgents, protects Soldiers

BAGHDAD – U.S. aircraft dropped four bombs killing 11 insurgents July 7 near Hawr Rajab, Iraq.

Paratroopers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 40th Cavalry Regiment requested attack aviation support after their patrol came under attack by small arms fire and heavy machine gun fire during a reconnaissance mission.

Two FA-18F Hornets dropped two 500-pound joint direct attack munitions and two 500-pound laser-guided bombs on the insurgents. There was minimal damage to structures in the vicinity of the attack.

No U.S. Soldiers were injured in the attack.

Company B, 1-40th Cav. is attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

2-3 teams with Air Force to destroy IEDs, DBIEDs

ARAB JABOUR – A pre-planned combined arms mission between 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division and the Air Force began July 7.

The mission called for the destruction of 14 suspected IEDs and DBIEDs (Deep Buried Improvised Explosive Devices).

To accomplish the mission, a B-1 Bomber was tasked to drop 20 Joint Direct Attack Munitions on the intended targets. Altogether 20 bombs were dropped. The first five JDAMS were dropped, and no secondary blasts were visible due to the distance from the target. However, all of the remaining targets with the exception of one reported secondary explosion.

“Making this mission, not only possible, but such a success as well, is due largely to the numerous residents who have come forward and freely given our forces the needed information required to target these locations,” said, Maj. David Oeschger, 2nd BCT executive officer.



A UH-47 Chinook helicopter lifts off from Sather Airbase for an air assault mission.

Chinooks used in more air assaults

Story and photos by
Pfc. Monica K. Smith
3 CAB PAO

Sather Air base – Chinook helicopter crews of the Combat Aviation Brigade are finding their missions are extending past the traditional role of transporting supplies and materiel to a more aggressive form of transportation.

Chinooks are participating more often in air assault missions transporting military forces to confront and attack insurgents.

The UH-47 Chinook helicopter can carry three times as many passengers as the UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter.

“Doing the (nightly) transporting thing is good,” said Spc. Stanford Horne, crew chief, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment. “But with air assault you kind of feel like you are accomplishing something, which we are in the first place – we’re putting people where they need to go.”

Traditionally the CAB uses Blackhawks for air movement and air assault by moving personnel around the battlefield rather than on the roads, which have improvised explosive devices, said Capt. Daniel Morris, battle captain for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-3 Avn.

Blackhawks are able to maneuver into smaller landing areas, however Chinooks have the capabilities to facilitate larger missions simply because of their size, said Spc. John Huber, also with Co. B. Chinooks

can carry 33 people, 24 medical litters or stretchers, and have a pay-load of up to 25,000 pounds. In addition, the seats are “quick release” meaning they fold up rapidly to fit more equipment if needed.

The ground commander has a working knowledge of each helicopter and its capabilities and will make a request based on his needs. Often a combination of Blackhawks and Chinooks will be used, depending on the number of troops to transport. The Blackhawks can carry 11 people meaning the Chinook carries three times as much.

“We use [Chinooks] a lot when we have a bunch of people we need to move,” said Morris.

However size isn’t necessarily a positive aspect for the Chinook. Because they often carry more weight the Chinook is not as agile as the Blackhawk.

They also take longer to unload on the ground just because of the number of Soldiers they carry.

“The fact that we can carry a lot of troops means that we have to spend more time on the ground during the assault getting rid of the troops whereas the Blackhawks, as soon as they’re on the ground those guys are out in a nanosecond. We’re out in three or four seconds and that can be significant depending on the conditions of the field,” said Chief Warrant Officer Manny Portela, pilot with Co. B.

The time on ground can be nerve wracking to some of the Chinook crewmembers because conditions in theater can change at a moment’s notice.

Huber’s first air assault mission was simple: drop off Soldiers who were going after IED manufacturers. However when a mortar hit nearby, Huber realized his role in this theater

was more than as a simple taxi service.

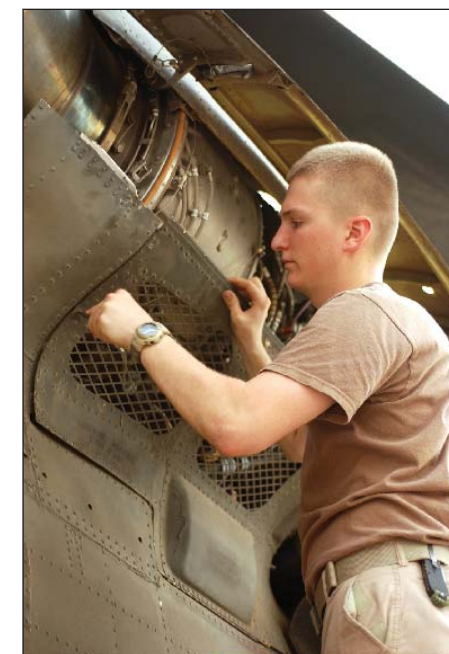
“I was scared,” said Huber. “But I started thinking about it and that’s why we’re here, to help the guys on the ground.”

During their second air assault, Huber’s fellow crewmember Horne armed the ramp gun, sitting on the edge of the ramp and anchored to the helicopter. The gun seat, which would normally be there, was removed to allow infantry soldiers to be able to exit the aircraft quickly.

Despite the uncomfortable flight, Horne enjoys participating in air assaults.

“I like it. It keeps you on your toes,” said Horne. “You don’t have room to mess up. It makes you better, at least that’s how I feel.”

Huber echoed Horne’s opinion, “I love it.”



Spc. John Huber, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, closes the flaps on a Blackhawk as he prepares for an air assault mission.

4-25 News Briefs

IED ring broken by Operation Bastogne

KALSU – Speed, stealth and surprise are key ingredients to any successful combat operation, and Paratroopers and Soldiers from Task Force Steel are perfecting that recipe day in and day out in North Babil.

The Steel task force of the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division put those assets to use in the early morning hours July 1 during Operation Bastogne, a raid near the Chaka III area of North Babil.

“Operation Bastogne was designed to capture members of an improvised explosive device cell operating along Highway 1 and other roads in the north Babil province,” said Capt. Stew Lindsay, commander of Company C, 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

Insurgent leader captured during Operation Grenada

KALSU – The ringleader of a cell responsible for conducting rocket and improvised explosive device attacks on the people and security forces of North Babil was captured by Task Force Steel near Tunis, July 7.

Paratroopers of 3rd Battalion, 509th Airborne, and Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment of the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division conducted an assault named Operation Grenada while simultaneously surrounding the target’s house with tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles.

Task Force Steel also captured two other cell members along with a rangefinder used to aim and target rocket attacks, IED materials, two AK-47 assault rifles with 600 rounds of ammunition, a hunting knife, a U.S. flag and other U.S. materials, and Jaysh al Mahdi militia propaganda.

In addition to the cell leader, cell members, weapons and materials, the Task Force also captured a Bongo truck that tested positive for exposure to explosive materials.

Geronimo Paratroopers capture cell leader

KALSU – Task Force Geronimo Paratroopers captured a cell leader responsible for conducting rocket and improvised explosive device attacks in Iskandariyah, July 9, near Mussayyib.

Paratroopers from 1st Battalion, 501st Airborne, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, conducted a raid on the man’s house and arrested him without incident. The man was responsible for conducting attacks against the residents and security forces of Iskandariyah.

The cell leader is being held for further questioning.

Marne Soldiers conduct raid



Staff Sgt. Sean A. Foley

A Soldier with Company C, 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, searches a vehicle during a raid near Tounis, Iraq, July 8. The purpose of the raid was to capture a militia member responsible for rocket attacks aimed at FOB Kalsu.

2 captured in Operation Geronimo Strike III

4th BCT (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division

KALSU – Paratroopers from Strike Force Geronimo detained two suspected al Qaeda insurgents during an air assault and raid July 10 northwest of Iskandariyah.

Paratroopers from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 509th Airborne, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division conducted Operation Geronimo Strike III in order to capture members of an al Qaeda cell wanted in connection with the kidnapping of three American Soldiers and other attacks against Iraqi and Coalition Forces.

“Tonight, we conducted an air assault into the Jurf As Sukr area looking for two high level targets,” said Capt. Matthew Gregory, commander of Co. A and a Charlotte, N.C. native.

“This is an area that coalition forces had not been to in a little while. This shows them we have the ability to get in places they thought they were safe and get them where they live”

In addition to capturing the cell members, the operation netted two AK-47 assault rifles, eight fully loaded magazines, two hand grenades and a ski mask.

“Going after the worst of the worst is what Operation Geronimo Strike was designed to do,” said 1st Lt. John Lafferty, a platoon leader with Co. A, from Valdese, N.C. “There are guys who are on the fence,



Sgt. Ernest Henry

Paratroopers from Company Alpha, 3rd Battalion, 509th Airborne, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division wait on the landing zone to be picked up by helicopters following the completion of Operation Geronimo Strike III.

and when they hear we’re capturing their leadership, we have a better chance of stabilizing the government and legitimizing the security forces her,” Valdese added

The insurgents are being held for further questioning.

The weapons and ammunition were confiscated for use in the investigation.

1-15 Infantry uncovers weapons cache



Story by Sgt. Natalie Rostek
3rd HBCT PAO

FOB HAMMER – Members of Company C, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment and supporting elements conducted a patrol which uncovered a cache near Wahida July 6.

The unit searched two houses based on information from a local Iraqi who claimed the houses contained weapons caches.

Inside the first house, Soldiers from Company C found eight rounds of ammunition, one Iraqi Army uniform, two sets of body armor and two AK-47 rifles. Soldiers also found paraphernalia associated with the Jaysh al-Mahdi, “Mahdi Army.”

In the second house, Soldiers found one rocket-propelled grenade launcher, two RPGs, four anti-personnel rockets, two AK-47 assault rifles, eight full AK-47 magazines, six empty magazines and two hand grenades.

The 1-15 Inf. is assigned to the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, from Fort Benning, Ga.



Staff Sgt. Shawn Weismiller
RPGs and a launcher found by 1-15 Soldiers.

Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment confiscate weapons and ammunition from an insurgent cache near Wahida, Iraq, July 6. Mahdi army paraphernalia was also found.

3-1 Cavalry pushes into night, looks for IED ringleader

Scouts glean information for future missions

Story and photos by Spc. Ben Hutto
3rd HBCT PAO

FOB HAMMER — Soldiers of Company B, 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, listened intently as 1st Lt. James Self, of Mobile, Ala., the platoon leader of 1st platoon, gave his mission brief in the glow of humvee headlights.

Company B would be going to the small town of Hollandia to capture an individual believed to be involved with an improvised explosive device network operating in the area.

This was not their first night mission since arriving at FOB Hammer three months ago, but every face was a picture of concentration and focus. Within moments, the brief would be over and the Soldiers would go to their separate vehicles.

One by one Soldiers killed the lights on their humvees as they drove outside the wire. The Soldiers’ night vision goggles turned the landscape into a green world that can be seen clearly.

“They are doing well (on night missions),” said Self. “They continually get excited when they hear we have one coming up. I’d say we are more comfortable doing them, to be honest.”

Capt. David Smith, of Grand Rapids, Mich., commander of Company B, agreed with Self’s assessment.

“That’s how we train,” he explains. “At the NTC (National Training Center) and Hammer Focus we got our guys used to using the (night vision goggles) in the blackest of conditions. It’s like second nature to them now. They are all comfortable using them.”

As the convoy moved toward Hollandia, Smith gave his views on Hollandia.

“I like this town,” he said. “The kids here are awesome. When we come out here during the day, they are all over the place.”

If it sounds like the relationship between Hollandia and 3-1 Cavalry is good, it is because of the work Smith and his team have put into that relationship.

Smith explained, “When we first arrived there, the locals’ reaction to us was cold; neutral at best. Now they are very friendly. We’ve arrested a few bad guys out here. We’ve started a few projects in the area. The people here have faith that we are going to do what we say we will. They know we are going to capture the bad guys. They have no problem telling us when someone who isn’t supposed to be in the town is there.”

The convoy rolled into the town around 11:30 p.m. The men in the town came out and began talking with the Soldiers through interpreters. Soldiers began spreading out and looking for their target.

“A scout’s motto is that we own the

night,” said Spc. Aaron Quitugah, from Irvine, Calif., a scout with Company B. “On a mission like this, we can scout around the town and see in places where people think they can hide. We have the advantage, definitely.”

After several hours of searching, the Soldiers were unable to find their target. Leaders of Company B don’t view that as a bad thing, however.

“We try to be a friendly presence out here,” said Self. “We got good information tonight even though our target wasn’t there. It’s important that the people here see us and know we are out there at night looking out for them. They are comfortable with us. When we stop people at night now, they don’t seem nervous. They feel comfortable that we are out here. They talk to us. That gets us good information so we can do our job better.”

As silently as they came into the town, they move out.

“We think there are caches out there,” said Smith. “That mission will help us later. We will continue to use our relationships we are making out there to find them. The local populations help is critical.”

Quitugah agrees with his commander’s assessment and remains ready to deal with the slow nights as well as the busy ones.

“This last mission went okay,” he said. “When we first got here, we thought trouble would push our way from Baghdad and it hasn’t happened yet. A lot of us feel like something big will happen and we are



A Soldier from 1st Platoon, Company B, 3rd Squadron, pulls security on a night mission July 3.



1st Lt. James Self, 24, Mobile, Ala., platoon leader for 1st Plt., Co. B, 3rd Sqdn., briefs his Soldiers before the night mission.

ready for it. We are staying on our toes because some big cells will be pushed out of Baghdad to the smaller places like this. They won’t be farmers or shoemakers; they will be the professionally trained fighters. We will be ready for them.”

Dogface vehicle mechanics bolster the fight

Story and photo by
Spc. William Hatton
Task Force Marne PAO

CAMP VICTORY – As a convoy commander prepares to roll through the dangerous streets of Baghdad a lot might run through his mind. There are important checks and preparations that take place before he can leave. As the preparations are made, one important question might arise: How capable are my vehicles for the trip and back?

Task Force Marne mechanics answer the question every day with their diligent work in making sure every vehicle that rolls outside the wire is more than capable for the trip.

“The work is hard, but it leaves a great feeling when we do something right for the guys that go outside the wire every day,” said Spc. Tremayne Parker, a mechanic with Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division.

“We spend hours outside in the

110 degree heat every day working on different kind of vehicles,” said Parker, of Newport News, Virg.

Although the hot conditions might be hard to work in, it still needs to be done every day, said Pvt. Michael Williams, a mechanic with HHSC, STB, 3rd Inf. Div.

“If we don’t do it, who is going to, asked Williams, a native of Killeen, Texas.

As the mechanics learn to put the heat aside, as difficult as it can be, learning the different parts of vehicles and growing as a mechanic becomes important.

“One of the ways we are able to be successful is by knowing how to take care of our vehicles,” Parker said.

When Soldiers come out of advanced individual training, knowledge of vehicle maintenance is very limited, Parker added. The more a Soldier gets to work and learn, the more success will follow.

“I’ve been in the Army now for six years,” Parker said. “Being in for this

long has taught me so much.”

“I’m working on my fifth deployment,” Williams said. “After being here so much, I try to take what I know and pass it on to some of the younger Soldiers.”

“When we were leaving to come here, we got a lot of Soldiers straight out of AIT. A lot of them were inexperienced at first, but as we work together and they got more experience, their work started getting better,” Williams said.

There are many reasons why a mechanic chooses his profession. Whether it’s the a love of getting one’s hands dirty, feeling a need to take something apart, or wanting to save some cash by working on one’s own car, there is a joy that comes from helping the Soldiers who fight the enemy every day.

“I’d rather focus on the guy that goes outside the wire than the one that is going to the PX,” Parker said. “Helping that guy is why I’m here, and that’s why I love my job so much.”



Pfc. Joshua Barnes, a mechanic with HHSC, STB, 3rd Inf. Div., inspects various components of a vehicle ensuring that it runs properly.

Money as a Weapon on battlefield

By Petty Officer 2nd Class Timothy R. Zwigart
3rd Civil Affairs Battalion, G-9 S.W.E.T. Coordinator

As part of our fight on the battlefield we have been and are using Money as a Weapon.

We are using the precision use of money to help shape the battlefield in a non-lethal way to help the battlefield commander achieve his objective. Shown here are two programs and how they can help the troops on the ground shape their area of operations.

The Commander’s Emergency Response Program is one program that can be used. Some examples of how CERP has been used are listed below. The big thing with CERP is it has a wide range of applications to give the commander on the ground greater flexibility in its use. It is used to repair essential services which helps improve the lives of the Iraqi people.

By doing projects that brings electricity, water, sewage system, and trash removal to a neighborhood. We improve the living standards of Iraqis but also we help their economy grow.

We also do projects to repair pumping stations and canals which help the agricultural industry. By making it possible for businesses to operate we make it possible for them to hire workers, this allows the Iraqis to earn an honest living and be less likely to support anti-Iraqi forces.

CERP is multi-faceted in that it is used in a number of areas to give commanders the ability to do big and small projects to affect their battlefield in the way that brings them the most benefit. Besides doing these big projects we can also do little projects that in a specific areas can make a bigger difference.

One example is a company commander can enter a village or town and notice a lot of manual labor type projects need to be performed, such as road cleaning, trash pick-up, ditch digging or other manual labor jobs. He will then submit a CERP project request for funding to employ

local residents, preferably males from ages 18-35, to do those jobs. He will then go back regularly and check on the work and pay the individuals doing the work.

This accomplishes many things; One, it builds a relationship with the community. Two, it employs men who might otherwise be employed by AIF. Three, by working, these men earn an honest living and are less likely to join a militia because either they are making money to feed their families or are too tired to go out at night and plant Improved Explosive Devices. Four, it also gets needed work done in the village and improves the lives of all. Last, as an added benefit by constantly visiting the area we develop a relationship with the people and that would make them more likely to work with Coalition Forces.

This particular use of CERP funds has been very useful in the Anbar area and has resulted in thousands of Iraqis being employed. Along with that they have had a large drop in attacks where these projects have been conducted.

Another program we can use is the Rewards program. With this program company commanders can have money in their pockets, so when they enter a village, town, or area and they get a valid tip that helps identify a threat they can pay for that tip.

By having this ability it allows quicker payment which helps make more people to want to provide tips if they know there are not a lot of strings attached. Also the company commander has the ability to pay in dollars, Iraqi Dinar, or like-kind objects.

For example, someone may give a tip but may not want money and may want clothes, a watch, or even a goat. As long as the value is the same as what the tip would be worth it can be done. This greatly improves the flexibility of the program.

These are just two programs under MAAWS helping company-level commanders meet their objective.

(This is part one of a two-part series on Money as a Weapon. Read the next “Marne Focus” for part two.)

Harness keeps tower guards from falling, secure

HOPE, from page 4

injuries that we’ve been seeing in some units in Iraq. Soldiers trying to climb up into those towers have a difficult time, especially with the amount of gear we wear. The ‘Hope Rope’ should eliminate many of the problems we’re seeing associated with Soldiers’ safety in guard towers.”

In addition to the ropes, Hope and his team have also created and installed sniper screens in towers throughout the 2nd BCT’s sector. The team has begun welding ballistic windshields from Army vehicles to metal supports in the towers.

“The screens are to reduce injury from sniper fire,” said Hope. “They will afford the Soldiers some much-needed protection.”

Hope’s team of four Soldiers is currently producing both the Hope Rope and the sniper screens at their welding shop on Camp Striker.

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The Marne Forward
search for “Marne Forward” on www.dvidshub.net

Recourse for bad ‘report card’: appealing evaluations

SFC Paul Louderback
Task Force Marne IG

In the total Army, over two hundred thousand evaluation reports are written upon officers, warrant officers and NCOs each year. Historically, the vast majority of those who render evaluation reports discharge this important responsibility with due care and consideration in accurately recording the performance and potential of their subordinates.

If you receive an evaluation report which you firmly believe is an inaccurate or unjust evaluation of your performance and potential, or one that contains administrative errors, that report may be a candidate for an appeal. Likewise, a report that was not rendered in accordance with the Army Regulation in effect at the time of preparation may be considered for appeal.

In deciding what to appeal, you must consider early on whether you can gather useful evidence in support of an appeal. Your self-authored statement alone does not suffice as evidence of an inaccurate, unjust or administratively flawed evaluation report. The report as accepted by HRC is presumed to be correct until you prove that it is not.

The first step in the army redress System is the Commander’s Inquiry. A Commander’s Inquiry will not be used to document differences of opinion among members of the rating chain about a rated Soldier’s performance and potential. The evaluation system establishes rating chains and normally relies on the opinions of the rating officials. Rating officials will evaluate a rated individual and their opinions constitute the organization’s view of that Soldier.

The primary purpose of the commander’s inquiry is to provide a greater degree of command involvement in preventing obvious injustices to the rated Soldier and correcting errors before they become a matter of permanent record. A secondary purpose is to obtain command involvement in clarifying errors or injustices after the NCOER is accepted at HQDA. In these after-the-fact cases, it is not intended to be a substitute for the appeals process, which is the primary means of addressing errors and injustices after they have become a matter of permanent record. Additional information concerning the commander’s inquiry is contained in Section II, Chapter 6, AR 623-3.

The second step is submission of an appeal. You should begin preparation of an appeal as soon as possible after receiving an evaluation report with which you have

good reason to strongly disagree. Some appellants find reluctance on the part of supporters still serving under the same rating chain to provide statements; this should be taken into consideration. Waiting too long, adds to the difficulty of locating those who might offer support or in gathering records that might serve as evidence.

Appeals on reports prepared on the OER and NCOER must be submitted within three years of the completion date. This restriction will only be waived under exceptional circumstances. Administrative appeals will continue to be considered regardless of the period of the report. However, the likelihood of successfully appealing a report diminishes, as a rule, with the passage of time.

Your success in appealing a report will depend largely on your effort to present clear and convincing evidence that the evaluation is inaccurate or unjust. The best evidence is obtained from third parties who were in a position to observe your performance from the same perspective as your rating officials.

Evidence submitted includes statements from third parties and/or rating officials, and often includes documents from other sources (investigations, inspections, etc.). There are no constraints on type and amount; however, Chapter 6, AR 623-3, provides fairly extensive guidance as to what evidence can be helpful. Generally speaking, that guidance addresses evidence in terms of its relevance to the contested report and an appellant’s contentions. Vantage points and firsthand knowledge are important factors in selecting third parties to support an appeal. In addition to your evidence, you should also provide a self-authored statement as an enclosure to your appeal. In this statement provide as much information concerning what you accomplished during the rating period, any problems you encountered and your relationship with the rating officials. This will be your only opportunity to present your side of the story since the board will not contact you or allow you to appear in person.

The time necessary to process an appeal varies with the type and complexity of the appeal, the volume of appeals being processed at the time your appeal is accepted, and the extent of deliberation required to make an appropriate decision. The fact that you are scheduled to be considered by a DA promotion board will not cause your appeal to be expedited or change your priority.

If the appeal is denied, an appellant may seek new, additional evidence and submit a new appeal or may request relief from the next agency in the Army’s redress system, the Army Board for Correction of Military Records

(ABCMR). Operation of the ABCMR is governed by AR 15-185. If your case was decided by the SRB, a case summary of the board’s consideration is available under the Privacy Act (PA).

Many situations exist in which either law or regulation provides Soldiers a remedy or means of redress. Soldiers must seek and exhaust the prescribed redress or remedy before an IG can provide assistance. Once the Soldier has used the available redress procedures, IG action is limited to a review of the redress process to determine if the Soldier was afforded the due process provided by law or regulation.

Examples of situations where specific redress, remedy, or appeals procedures are applicable include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Courts-martial actions.
- (b) Nonjudicial punishment.
- (c) Officer evaluation reports.
- (d) NCO evaluation reports.
- (e) Enlisted reductions.
- (f) Type of discharge received.
- (g) Pending or requested discharge.
- (h) Complaints that a commanding officer has wronged a soldier.
- (i) Financial liability investigations of property loss.
- (j) Relief for cause.
- (k) Adverse information filed in personnel records (except for allegations of reprisal).
- (l) Claims

For additional information concerning appeals, please contact one of the following agencies responsible for your particular component.

ACTIVE DUTY OFFICERS:

Commander
U.S. Army Human Resources Command-Alexandria
ATTN: AHRC-MSE-A
200 Stovall Street
Alexandria, VA 22332-0442
DSN: 221-8642/3
COML: (703) 325-8642/3

ACTIVE DUTY NCOs:

U.S. Army Human Resources Command-Indianapolis
ATTN: AHRC-RE-A
8899 East 56th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46249-5301
DSN: 699-3678
COML: (317)510-3678
FAX: (317)510-3745 (DSN 699)

FACE, from page 4

Keenan, true to his word, was in the front of their wedge-shaped formation, the point man, carrying not only his usual M-4 carbine but a 12-gauge pump shotgun.

“We went toward where we last saw him, came around the corner of a house, and saw a reedline. We knew we were looking for him in the field there – but when I looked two or three feet away, downward, I saw his face and his eyes, and told him ‘Get up! Americans!’ and right then, I heard a pop and my head snapped back.”

His team leader, just behind him and to the right, saw Keenan’s head jerk back and heard the shot as well.

“As soon as (the terrorist) shot, I saw the flash and saw him – he was pretty

close,” said Sgt. Joseph Connolly, a native of Minneapolis, Minn. “For a split second, I thought Keenan was dead, but I didn’t even think about it, I just engaged.”

“I realized I’d been shot,” Keenan said, “but I didn’t know if it was in the head, or in my Kevlar (helmet).

Keenan said he regained his vision and fired lethal shots at the enemy.

“We made the call that he was dead, and we moved out,” Keenan said matter-of-factly.

“I took point again. We detained two local nationals at the target house ... then went to the next house, detained two more, and then detained one at the last house with a locked-and-loaded AK-47,” he said. “We took them all to the platoon sergeant and started questioning them. They all said that the guy we really wanted had

gone into the field, the one in the gray track suit.”

They searched fruitlessly, Keenan said, searching the fields and reedlines, clearing the houses three times before another platoon arrived to secure the area and they could leave.

“After it was all over and we got back in the choppers, it hit me,” he said. “It was a ‘Thank God I’m alive’ feeling.”

The bullet pierced his helmet and traveled a few inches through the helmet before exiting near the top of his head.

The man was found to have two grenades with him – one with the pin pulled out.

Keenan said he was shot on a previous deployment, but the round struck his body armor and only bruised him.

Improvised explosive devices, likewise,

have detonated nearby when he’s been on missions, but they failed to wound him.

“I’ve never been wounded, no Purple Hearts – scratches, little bruises, that’s all,” he said. “This gear does what it’s supposed to do. It’s not supposed to stop the round, it’s supposed to deflect it, and that’s what it did. ...but it was amazing at point-blank range.”

He told his wife about his near-miss when he got back late that night.

“She was worried,” he said, but he reassured her and their 10-year-old daughter that he was fine.

He won’t be changing the way he works, he added.

“As long as Soldiers see me do this, and see things like that happen and see me keep going – they’ll keep going through this deployment.”

Former history teacher now a Soldier who makes it

Story by Spc. Chris McCann
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. PAO

FOB YUSUFIYAH — College money, job experience or lack of employment opportunities are usually some of the motivators Soldiers cite for joining the military.

But Cpl. James Hogan left a job he loved, teaching high-school history and economics in Superior, Wis., to enlist in November 2005 to be a part of American history.

"I was teaching history and about the wars, and I felt it was my patriotic duty to serve, like the guys who went before me," Hogan said. "I don't want to sit on my deck at 60 years old and tell people I had a chance to serve and didn't."

Hogan graduated from the University of Wisconsin — Superior, and began teaching

at a Catholic middle school, then at a high school in Maple, Wis. In addition to teaching American history, he taught economics, criminal justice, social science and sociology, and coached football, girls basketball, and track and field.

But he gave it all up to join the Army. "The students were surprised. Some

were sad, and some were probably happy," he said, laughing. "I always wanted to teach, and I was no good at math, I don't like science, and my vocabulary is terrible. But I love politics and history, and I love this country — so, American history."

Hogan works with Company A, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), out of Fort Drum, N.Y. His unit is the military transition team that has been training 4th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division.

'It's an honor to serve my country alongside all my fellow Soldiers in uniform, and I'm thankful for the opportunity to do it.'

Cpl. James Hogan
Co. A, 4th Bn., 31st Inf. Reg.,
2nd BCT, 10th Mountain Div.

"I've really enjoyed working with them day in and day out," he said of the Soldiers in his company.

"From the different personalities, meeting people from all over the United States, I've learned a lot. I really respect everyone in the Army, whatever they do, but these (infantry troops)

are the ones putting in blood, sweat and tears."

A willingness to be on the ground and on the front lines is a respect-earner. One of his heroes, he said, is Theodore Roosevelt.

"He really solidified my desire to join the Army," Hogan said. "He quit the Navy



Courtesy photo

James Hogan (center, with yellow jacket), of Superior, Wisc., now Cpl. Hogan, speaks to the Northwestern High School Tigers football team during his last season coaching in 2004. Hogan now serves with Company A, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, N.Y.

to join the Army and then formed the Rough Riders, because it always bugged Teddy Roosevelt that his father didn't fight in the Civil War when the country needed him.

"I like his maverick spirit, he did what was in his heart, and he sure wouldn't be making decisions based on poll numbers if he were president today."

Hogan has a rather maverick spirit himself, which serves him well with Soldiers both older and younger than him.

"I'm 33 years old," he said. "In civilian life, I would have been teaching some of these guys, but they're teaching me the ways of the infantry here," he said. "It's tough being older, especially as an enlisted Soldier. I didn't become an officer because that's not what I wanted. I've had responsibility. I just wanted to be a grunt. And it's tough to get smoked by a guy nine years younger, but that's when you just have to swallow your pride."

Hogan plans to return to teaching — and coaching — when his term of enlistment ends, but he's toying with the idea of going into the chaplaincy.

"I'm a man of faith," he said. "I want to study scripture more in-depth, and I want to serve Soldiers in a more personal way. Guys have been laying it all on the line here for five years now, and the turmoil and struggle and separation from family is

hard. I feel I could help, and give strength to them to hang in there."

If he doesn't choose that road, however, he said what he's learned in the Army will serve him well as a teacher.

"I think I'll get more respect as a teacher — I can bring in my photos and things from Iraq, and that would be really good. If I go into the chaplaincy, I'd like to be an Army Reserve or National Guard chaplain so I could still teach.

"It's an honor to serve my country alongside all my fellow Soldiers in uniform," Hogan said, "and I'm thankful for the opportunity to do it."



Courtesy photo

Cpl. James Hogan (left) and 1st Lt. Jonathan Swierat during an operation near Yusufiyah, Iraq. Hogan left a teaching job he loved to join the Army.



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