

The Expeditionary Times

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Vol. 3 Issue 13

February 17, 2010

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Tune up



New oil service center
opens at JBB

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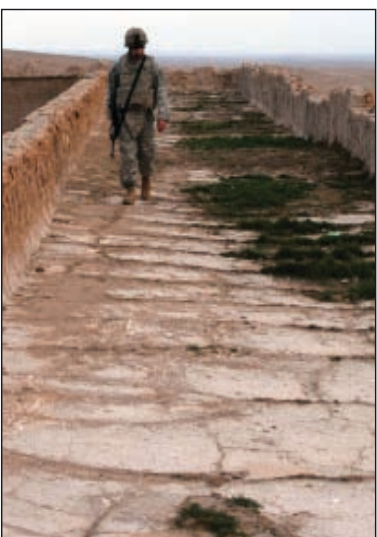
Change over



Change of command
ceremony held at Adder

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Historic landscape



Mississippi Guardsmen
visit ancient ruins

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Previously injured Vets return to JBB

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. RYAN TWIST
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq –
Eight Soldiers who
were injured while
serving in Iraq re-
turned to Joint
Base Balad, Iraq,
Feb. 5 during

Operation Proper Exit Four, to
tell their stories and witness the
changes the country has under-
gone since they last served here.

Air Force Chief Master Sgt.
John A. Elder, the superinten-
dent with the 332nd Expedi-
tionary Medical Group, said the
program gives injured Soldiers a
chance to travel throughout the
country and revisit once familiar
locations.

Elder, an Appomattox, Va.,
native, said the injured Soldiers
tell their stories so the service
members who are here now can
understand the country's im-
provements.

"It's a good chance for those
Soldiers to come back to Iraq, see
what goes on and leave the coun-
try on their own terms," he said.

SEE EXIT ON PAGE 4



Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, commanding general of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) out of Fort Hood, Texas, and a Mansfield, Ohio, native, hugged Capt. Ferris W. Butler, former platoon leader with D Company, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, N.Y., during Operation Proper Exit Four at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Butler, a Port Tobacco, Mass., native, participated in the event, in which previously injured Veterans returned to Iraq to tell their stories to the Soldiers now serving there.

New Mexico adjutant general visits Adder

BY SGT. CANDACE WESTLUND
41ST IBCT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CONTINGENCY OPERATING
BASE ADDER,
Iraq – The New
Mexico adjutant
general vis-
ited Soldiers
from two New
Mexico Na-
tional Guard units Feb. 3 at
Contingency Operating Base
Adder, Iraq.

Soldiers with the 720th
Convoy Security Company
and the 1115th Transpor-
tation Company, both with the
41st Infantry Brigade Com-
bat Team, 13th Sustainment

Command (Expeditionary),
had breakfast with Brig. Gen.
Kenny Montoya, an Albuquer-
que, N.M., native, who held
town hall meetings to address
his Soldiers.

"I want you to be true to
yourself," he said. "The person
that I sent here, I need you to
still be that person when you
come home."

Montoya asked his Soldiers
to be proud of their shoulder
sleeve insignia, as well as the
combat patches they earned
with the 41st IBCT.

He said they should be proud
to represent their unit and
work under a great brigade.

SEE GENERAL ON PAGE 4



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Cory Grogan

Brig. Gen. Kenny Montoya, the New Mexico National Guard adjutant general, talks with Soldiers from the 1115th Transportation Company out of Taos, N.M., Feb. 3 during a visit to Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, where his Soldiers serve with the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

Balad Blotter

February 4 - February 11

NEGLIGENT WEAPON DISCHARGE:

A complainant notified the Joint Defense Operations Center of a negligent discharge at the south entry control point Feb. 3 at 11:45 a.m. Patrols were briefed and dispatched. Witness one said, via Air Force IMT 1168/Statement of Witness, her vehicle was parked next to the inbound lane when she heard a loud bang. Witness one said she made contact with witness three to ask him if one of his gunners had a negligent discharge and he replied that none had and proceeded to his compound. The complainant and witness two's statements corroborate that it was the gunner from a Humvee. The patrol arrived at the Law Enforcement Desk to call and have the subject and witness four report to complete statements. Upon their arrival at the LED, the patrol advised the subject of his rights under IAW Article 31, Uniform Code of Military Justice for violation of Article 134/Negligent Discharge via Air Force IMT 1168/Statement of Suspect. The subject acknowledged his rights, declined legal counsel and wrote a statement. When he entered the ECP, he traversed his turret to the 3 o'clock position facing the eastern side of the inbound lane with the muzzle at a 45 degree angle. When he began to clear his weapon and ensured it was on safe, he did not have positive control of the cocking handle while opening the feed tray cover, so the bolt rode forward and fired a round into the air. The subject said a test fire was completed before the mission without problems. The subject was released via Department of Defense Form 2708/Receipt for Inmate/Detained Person to witness three.

DAMAGE TO GOVERNMENT PROPERTY:

A complainant telephoned the Law Enforcement Desk and reported a Polaris Gator had been damaged Feb. 5 at 9 p.m. at H-1 Housing. A patrol was briefed and dispatched. The complainant said, via Air Force IMT 1168 Statement of Complainant, on his way Morale, Welfare and Recreation west, he noticed the lights on the Gator were on without the key in the ignition. The complainant walked to the Gator to turn lights off when he noticed the ignition had been tampered with and a link in the chain securing the steering wheel had been cut. The complainant tried to insert the key into the Gator, but it would not fit because of the damage. The property was still secure after the chain had been cut. The patrol took four photographs. The complainant was advised to inform his chain of command.

LARCENY OF SECURE PRIVATE PROPERTY:

A complainant walked in the Law Enforcement Desk and reported a larceny had occurred Feb. 10. A patrol made contact with the complainant at the LED and initiated an Air Force Form 1168/Statement of Subject. The Eagles Nest made contact with the witness and initiated an AF Form 1168/Statement of Witness. The witness said the subject approached her and said he needed to talk to her. The witness said the subject said he was sorry for taking her laptop computer. The subject was advised of his rights via Article 31 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice for violation of Article 121/Larceny. He said he did not want a lawyer and was willing to make a statement. The subject admitted to taking the property from Bldg 7442/80th Ordnance Battalion. The subject was released to via Department of Defense Form 2708/Receipt for Inmate or Detained Person.

NIPR: 443-8602
SIPR: 241-1171
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Chaplain's Corner: find light in dark places

By CAPT. KERSTIN HEDLUND
90TH SUST. BDE. CHAPLAIN



A few days ago I was waiting at the passenger terminal for a flight when a man approached me and asked if he could speak to me for a few minutes.

He was on his way back home after a short tour here at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. He'd come to some of our Sunday services as another Soldier's battle buddy.

He said to me, "Throughout each service that I attended, I noticed a common theme. It seems we say that light triumphs over darkness, and life triumphs over death. It's a wonderful message, and I want to believe it, but that just hasn't been my experience. I've lived a dark, dark life. And even when I look for light and life, I cannot find it. Death triumphs, and I feel spent."

He is right; darkness and death are realities in all of our lives. Often, these things hit us when we least expect them. Sometimes, we live in darkness because of what we've done wrong. Other times, we have no control over the horrifying events that happen in our lives – a sudden death of a loved one, a natural disaster or sickness that meets us out of nowhere. When these events happen, our experiences of darkness consume us until we're nearly, or completely, burnt out.

A few years ago, I walked deep into a dark cave where tradition tells us Jesus was born. While I was there, I bought a small white taper from a priest who served in the church above the cave. I kept it for more than a year before I lit the candle. It may sound stupid, but I didn't want it to burn down. What would I have left from that cave to hold onto if I lit the candle? Nothing to light my darkness, so I kept it hidden and experienced no light from it.

Some years later I decided to pull it out and light it

just after Christmas, in the season we now find ourselves: epiphany. It's the season of light. If the candle was supposed to be a reminder of Christ, it had to burn for a while and then be consumed.

That's what Christ came for. He came to this earth, he came into the darkness to shine light and life on his people and then die. He came to be consumed by the world. It appeared for awhile that darkness and death had won.

From this side of the story, we can see that it was only after he died, only after he was consumed and burned down, that he shone even more brightly.

In this season of light, in this season of epiphany we can see that, because he took the risk and lit the light for a while, he shines even more brightly. We can see that Christ shines beyond the grave, beyond death and beyond sickness. He shines in you and shines in me, even, or especially, when we seem spent.

Light and life spring forth in songs that people in Haiti sing as they begin to trudge forward.

Light and life spring from a family that speaks to people about hope after their child tragically died.

The mystery is that it seems to burn more brightly for the world after it seems as though it's over and there's nothing left to burn.

The other mystery is that this light calls us into a community. So, when I have nothing left to give, our neighbor shines for us. When my neighbor has nothing left to give, I shine for him. Here we will find hope in our dark times.

We can also find hope in remembering that the light will not die forever; it always rises out of the darkness. Because of the darkness, we can sometimes see the flame of God shining more brightly, beckoning us forward to God's future, where darkness and death are forever defeated.



Raul,

Thank You for the last 15 years. (However, if we subtract the deployments it is more like 10 years!) You are the best dad and husband anyone could ask for. You are our HERO!! I love you with all of my heart. Happy 15th Anniversary!

Your wife,
Janette Marquez

PS: Trading option is voided!!!!!!

EXPEDITIONARY TIMES

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36th Sustainment Brigade
90th Sustainment Brigade
96th Sustainment Brigade
41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team
155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing
194th Engineer Brigade

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13th ESC Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz

Mission Statement: The Expeditionary Times Staff publishes a weekly newspaper with the primary mission of providing command information to all service members, partners, and Families of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) team and a secondary mission of providing a means for units on Joint Base Balad to disseminate command information to their audiences.

The Weekly Standard: title of address

By SGT. 1ST CLASS SAMMY JOHNSON
13TH ESC INSPECTOR GENERAL

Army Regulation 600-20 Army Command Policy outlines the proper way to address everyone in the military.

For example, chaplains are addressed as chaplain, regardless of pay

grade or rank. If you address them in writing, the grade is indicated in parentheses. For example, Chaplain (Major) John F. Doe.

When addressing junior enlisted Soldiers from E-1 thru E-3, the title of address is the word private. This is regardless of whether the Soldier is a private or a private first class.

From the E-5 through E-8, the unit of address is sergeant. If the master sergeant holds the position of first sergeant then their title of address is first sergeant.

For command sergeants major or sergeants major, the title of address is sergeant major.

The numerical pay grade will not

be used as a form of address or title in place of the proper title of address of grade. For example, Soldier holding the numerical pay grade of E-5 will be addressed as sergeant, not as E-5.

If you have questions about title of address please refer to AR 600-20, ask your chain of command or your local inspector general.

Joint Base Balad (13th ESC): DSN 433-2125 Lt. Col. Reginald Howard (Command Inspector General) Maj. Christopher Minor (Deputy) Master Sgt. Roy Thacker (NCOIC)	Adder/Tallil (36th Sust. Bde./41st IBCT): Maj. Andrea Shealy - DSN 833-1710 Maj. Jeffrey Copek - DSN 833-5915 Master Sgt. Marta Cruz – DSN 883-1710
Q-West (15th Sust. Bde.): DSN 827-6115 Lt. Col. Gary Davis	Al Asad (96th Sust. Bde.): DSN 440-7049 Sgt. 1st class Alexander Arce Master Sgt. Richard Faust
Taji (155 HBCT): DSN 834-3079 Lt. Col. Paul Bird	

Combat Stress: treat visible, invisible wounds equally

By NAVY CAPT. STEVE J. BRASINGTON
COMBAT STRESS CONTROL PSYCHIATRIST



Two Soldiers required medical evacuation out of theater for further evaluation and treatment.

The first Soldier took an overdose of acetaminophen in the context of a failing love relationship. The second Soldier sustained gunshot wounds to his lower leg when his roommate failed to clear his weapon before bringing it into the sleeping area for cleaning.

The first Soldier deliberately risked his life. The second suffered an accident due to another person's neglect.

Both men required lifesaving intervention.

The suicide attempter unwittingly poisoned his liver, requiring an antidote to be administered multiple times a day for several days to prevent liver failure and death.

The second man needed immediate aid to stop the loss of blood. Following stabilization of hemorrhaging, wound care and infection control removed the need for amputation of his injured leg.

To look at the suicide attempter, one could not tell that his life had been in the balance.

Gazing upon the gunshot victim, a significant injury was obvious due to orthopedic devices applied to his lower body.

The patient under psychiatric care was completely mobile and pain free.

In contrast, the trauma patient re-

quired assistance to move and did so with great discomfort.

As a blameless victim facing corrective surgeries and painful physical therapy, the physically wounded patient gains our compassion and support. He paid dearly for the negligence of someone else.

In contrast, the suicide attempter elicits less sympathy and support after deliberately harming his health, then leaving others to do his job.

The emotional wounds of the psychiatric patient are not visible. The physical wounds of the trauma patient are obvious.

I have noticed a tendency to view invisible wounds as less significant than surgical trauma. Consider the observations of Lt. Col. Michael Bell, a physician with the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine.

As reported in the November 8, 2009 issue of the Psychiatric News, Bell said, "Among U.S. troops, mental illness is the leading cause of hospital bed days and the second-ranking reason for medical encounters."

In addition, suicide remains the second leading cause of death in the U.S. Army, while accidents and trauma remain the leading causes of death.

Comparing the two patients, both required skilled medical intervention to prevent loss of life. Both Soldiers left the mission early, after weeks of preparation and training. Both consumed comparable amounts of medical and nursing care, including airlift services. Neither was expected to re-join his unit to complete the mission,

due to the seriousness of his injuries.

Examining the root causes for each injury, a lack of focus on safety combined with an underestimation of the lethal potential associated with weapons or medication was present in each case. The familiarity with guns and common medicines like Tylenol may engender complacency.

Another common denominator was poor communication. Ideally, the Soldier cleaning his weapon could have warned his roommate that he was going to clean weapons while his roommate was preparing to sleep. The man desperate to avoid losing his love interest could have benefitted from more effective communication skills. Both men shared similar root causes leading to close calls with death and removal from theater.

I challenge leaders and individuals to stop making distinctions between the visible wounds and the invisible wounds. Leaders should stop dismissing invisible wounds because their impact is as grave as visible wounds of war. Either can lead to premature loss of life or loss of manpower.

The threat of stress reactions is as significant as other medical conditions that threaten life or limb. Minimizing the potential for emotional or psychological conditions to impact the mission is counterproductive.

Combat stress offers evaluation near troops and, when appropriate, provides assistance to improve communication and coping skills. Education and prevention are priorities for the combat stress team. Help us save lives.

Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

Be sexual assault response coordinator smart: When you date someone, communicate your limits clearly with that person from the beginning. Both verbal and nonverbal communication, body language, can be used to ensure the message is understood. Call the Joint Base Balad SARC at 443-7272 or contact via pager 443-9001, 159 for help. Army members should seek assistance with their unit victim advocate or deployed-SARC; you may also call 433-7272 or 443-9001, 122/135 for assistance.

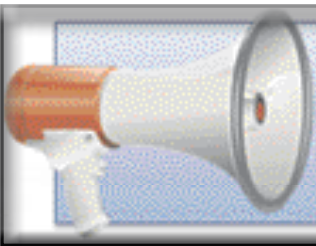
Oasis dining facility new hours of operation

Midnight hours:
12:30 a.m. - 3:30 a.m.

Breakfast hours:
5:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

Lunch hours:
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Dinner hours:
5 p.m. - 8 p.m.



Give a Shout Out!

Tell your family and friends how much you miss them.

Send a brief message to: expeditionarytimes@iraq.centcom.mil Subject line: "Shout Out"

EXIT: Soldiers share stories about injuries, recovery

EXIT FROM PAGE 1

The Soldiers revisited the Air Force Theater Hospital at JBB, where they were treated before they were evacuated from the country. Their tour was a chronological duplicate of their first visit to the hospital, starting with the stability room, moving through the emergency department and then to the helicopter pad, said Elder.

Some of the Soldiers had never even seen the hospital because it was a complex of tents when they were last here, he said.

"I've been looking forward to this for a long time," he said. "Proper Exit Three, last time, was supposed to come through and the weather stopped them from coming here. It was very disappointing when they didn't come. This will be one of the highlights of my tour here at the hospital."

The injured Veterans came back to tell Soldiers serving here what they have done with their lives since they were injured, using their life stories to inspire their fellow Soldiers, said Elder.

"To watch them get off that helicopter laughing, joking and just having a good time, was really, really pleasing for me," he said. "It's an honor for me to be here to help these guys."

Capt. Ferris W. Butler, former platoon leader with D Company, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, N.Y., said it was amazing to come back.

When he was injured at the end of 2006 by an improvised explosive device, the country as a whole was in turmoil, said Butler, a Port Tobacco, Mass., native. He said the Soldiers were uncertain if America would stay as long as it has to further freedom and democracy in Iraq. It was a time of struggle and uncertainty, said Butler.

"To be able to come back a few years later, after I've suffered losing both feet from elective amputation," he said, "it just brings so much closure to the entire mission. To see the country thriving, to see the Iraqi government and the Iraqi



Capt. Ferris W. Butler, former platoon leader with D Company, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, N.Y., talks to the Soldiers at Morale, Welfare and Recreation east Feb. 5 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Butler, a Port Tobacco, Mass., native, participated in Operation Proper Exit, which brings Veterans who were injured in Iraq back to the country to revisit the area and share their stories.

Army take over, it really means a lot."

In 2006, there were no vehicles on the road and all of the bridges were shut down, said Butler. In the four years that have passed, the country has changed, he said.

"We've literally been all over Iraq," he said. "To see the lights on at night, to see the water running and to see all the vehicular traffic going through the streets, it's absolutely unreal. We are literally rebuilding this country, said Butler.

Staff Sgt. Allison M. Evans, a supply sergeant with the 159th Seaport Operations Company out of Fort Story, Va., 80th Ordnance Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Com-

mand (Expeditionary), said this event helped the Veterans find closure and gave the younger Soldiers a better perspective, opening their eyes to the war as a whole.

Evans, a Jacksonville, N.C., native, said they witnessed the Veterans' strength in how they live their lives and cope with their difficulties.

"It kind of makes me feel like I don't have as much to stress out about because these guys have overcome so much," she said. "I can overcome the little things I do every day."

Some Veterans have come back more than once to help out new Soldiers who participate in the event, Evans said.

Elder said Soldiers who are interested in Proper Exit, but do not want to come to Iraq, can speak with Soldiers who have participated, to get a wealth of information about the program and those Veterans' experiences.

"I really see the looks on their faces," he said. "I know they're getting a lot out of it. I just thank them for having the strength and courage to come back. These guys went through some horrific times in their lives and they fought back from almost certain death in some cases. They are much stronger men than I could ever dream of being. I have a tremendous amount of respect for these Soldiers. I'll be there for them, anything they need."

GENERAL: 'I want you to be true to yourself'

GENERAL FROM PAGE 1

"I wish you could be me for a day and understand how proud of you I am," he said.

After Montoya addressed his Soldiers, he called upon every level of leadership, from platoon sergeant to team leader, to introduce their Soldiers and talk about the good work being done in their unit.

"You know your Soldiers best," Montoya said to them. "I want to hear about them from you."

Staff Sgt. Laurence Long, a Rock Springs, N.M., native, praised the general's visit.

"He is our general, he looks after us," Long said. "He told us from the

beginning he had our backs, and coming out here now proves it."

After lunch, the 720th CSC provided escort security for a tour of the Ziggurat of Ur.

The tour was organized by the Task Force Guardian Chaplain, Lt. Col. Ron McKay, a Jacksonville, Ore., native, and included the Ziggurat – a Sumerian tribute to the moon god Nanna – the palace ruins, tombs, and what is said to be the prophet Abraham's house.

Standing in front of the house, Montoya told his Soldiers, "I am humbled to be here at the Ziggurat with you. I have truly been blessed in life, and my biggest blessing is all of you."



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Cory Grogan

Brig. Gen. Kenny Montoya, the New Mexico National Guard adjutant general, talks with Soldiers from the 1115th Transportation Company out of Taos, N.M., Feb. 3 during a visit to Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, where his Soldiers serve with the Oregon National Guard's 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary)

Mississippi armor sergeant earns top honor

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. JOHN STIMAC
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE TAJI, Iraq – The Order of Saint George bronze medallion was awarded to the assistant operations sergeant with the 155th Special Troops Battalion, 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Feb. 9 in a ceremony at the headquarters company building at Contingency Operating Base Taji, Iraq.

Sgt. 1st Class Henry D. Harper, a Plantersville, Miss., native, was notified 36 hours prior to receiving the award that he would be recognized as a platoon sergeant and leader of armor Soldiers.

"I can't put it into words how I felt when I received the call," he said. "It was like being on a Super Bowl winning team."

According to the official armor association Web site, <http://www.armor-assn.org>, the award is given only to the very best tankers and cavalrymen. Most active and Reserve Soldiers are eligible for the award.

Any Army colonel in a position to evaluate the fitness of the award nominee may approve a nomination for the bronze medallion.

Col. John M. Rhodes, the deputy commander with the 155th HBCT and

Corinth, Miss., native, said it is always an honor to give awards of this caliber to a Soldier.

Rhodes, who is the president of the Armor Association with the 155th HBCT, said to be qualified, the Soldier must function in a leadership position in the career field.

"One must be armor qualified and belong to an armor unit," he said. "Harper was a tank commander and distinguished himself as a leader in all kinds of positions."

Rhodes said this was the first time he got to award the bronze medallion in a combat zone.

"Basically, that is what the medallion is all about. It makes it more fitting to be able to award it in a combat zone," he said.

Harper said it was an honor to receive the award.

"This is something I have been waiting my whole military career for," he said. "I didn't think I would see it in my military career. To be put in a group with some of the best armor Soldiers in the world is an honor."

The approval process is long and can take anywhere from four to six months.

"You have to be nominated by a senior officer, then the packet must be approved by a brigadier general, then that goes to the Armor Association to get approval by their commanding general," said Harper.

He said being awarded here in Iraq made it all the more special.



Col. John M. Rhodes, deputy commander with the 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team and a Corinth, Miss., native, knights Sgt. 1st Class Henry D. Harper, an assistant operations sergeant with the 155th Special Troops Battalion and a Plantersville, Miss., native. Harper was inducted into the Order of St. George Feb. 9 at Contingency Operating Base Taji, Iraq.

"It's been a blessing that I could have received this award," said Harper. "If it wasn't for really good (noncom-

missioned officers) and officers I have worked with, I would have never received this award."

Combat Soldiers in Iraq prepare for stateside hurricanes

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. JOHN STIMAC
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE TAJI, Iraq – While the 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) prepares to re-deploy in early March, it simultaneously prepares for its stateside mission should a hurricane hit the Mississippi gulf coast.

The unit hopes to have preparations complete by the end of February, unit leaders said.

Lt. Col. John K. Harlan, the operations officer in charge for the 155th HBCT and a Jackson, Miss., native, said these plans are in preparation for a hurricane making landfall in the Mississippi gulf coast.

"We are planning our part of the overall Mississippi National Guard response to the hurricane, a yearly exercise that we conduct," he said.

Harlan said they received the operations order in the first week of February from Joint Force Headquarters in Jackson, Miss.

"We have to plan for the movement of men and equipment from the Mississippi coastal areas and coordinate operations

with local, state and federal agencies," he said.

Those plans are further complicated by the unit's deployment. Harlan said as a National Guard unit, they are required to take on a dual role here.

"That's just the way we do business," he said. "While we currently are concentrating on the federal mission, we still have to allow for planning for our state mission."

Maj. Brent McCullouch, intelligence officer in charge with the 155th HBCT and a Jackson, Miss., native, said the planning began immediately after the unit received the order.

"If we didn't do it now, due to the redeployment, we wouldn't have got it done in time," he said.

McCullouch said his job is to look at and identify critical infrastructure in Mississippi



Maj. Brent McCullouch, intelligence officer in charge with the 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team and a Jackson, Miss., native, and Lt. Col. John K. Harlan, the operations officer in charge with the 155th HBCT and a Jackson, Miss., native, plan out their part in the hurricane evacuation plan for the Mississippi National Guard Feb. 8 at Contingency Operating Base, Taji. The brigade re-deploys in the beginning of March and was tasked to do its planning while still in theater.

pi and determine the impact the hurricane would have if it did hit land.

Maj. Rob Edwards, the deputy provost marshal with the 155th HBCT and a Saltillo, Miss., native, said the JFHQ plans the personnel distribution during hurricane season.

"Once the state determines which units are responsible for each county, they divide the units geographically," he said. "Most of the concentration goes to the southern six counties, but during Hurricane Katrina, all of Mississippi was affected."

Edwards said planning has definitely changed since Katrina.

"Now, we are in a proactive mode for responding to hurricanes; now we will go and set up our communications and police services before the hurricane hits," he said. "We now execute our plan according to the worst-case scenario ... which is a Katrina-like hurricane."

McCullouch said the planning process has also been improved since Katrina.

"The best improvement has to be our communications systems," he said. "Now we have the equipment to talk to people, much better coordination for assets that can give us an awareness of where the damage is, and we can get that linked to us quickly so we can respond faster. Before Katrina, we just talked about it, but since Katrina, there is a lot more planning involved."

Harlan said when Katrina hit, the unit was deployed here in Iraq.

"When we deployed last time, Katrina hit and we had to get a lot of National Guardsmen from other states," he said.

Mississippi Guardsman awarded for loyalty

STORY AND PHOTO BY
CAPT. MURRAY SHUGARS
2/198TH CAB

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE

Q-WEST, Iraq – A Mississippi Army National Guardsman received a Command Sergeant Major Award during a ceremony Feb. 1 at Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq.

Pfc. Quintavis B. Byrd, a sentry for an entry control point with A Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms, 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team out of Hernando, Miss., 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Tutwiler, Miss., native, was acknowledged for embodying loyalty, one of the seven Army values.

To honor outstanding service at the end of the deployment, the senior noncommissioned officers of the battalion recognized seven Soldiers from throughout the battalion who embodied loyalty, duty, respect, service, honor, integrity or personal courage, said Command Sgt. Maj. Perry Campbell.

"This is an NCO-driven effort to honor Soldiers who stood out during the deployment," said Campbell, a native of Senatobia, Miss. "The NCOs wanted to remind every Soldier in the battalion that outstanding service is not always the result of a single act. It is the everyday practice of upholding the Army values."

First Sgt. John L. Beasley, Byrd's senior NCO, said Byrd is an indispensable asset to the company.

"The Army defines loyalty as bear-



Pfc. Quintavis B. Byrd (center), an entry control point sentry and a Tutwiler, Miss., native, holds a Command Sergeant Major Award. He is flanked by 1st Sgt. John L. Beasley (left), a Hernando, Miss., native, and Staff Sgt. Nicholas Hughes, Byrd's platoon sergeant and a Batesville, Miss., native. Byrd was recognized for embodying loyalty, one of the seven Army values.

ing true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army and other Soldiers, being loyal to the nation and its heritage," said Beasley, a Hernando, Miss., native. "Pfc. Byrd has lived up to this definition during this deployment. He is truly loyal to the Soldiers he works with, his platoon and his unit. He is dependable and hardworking, and his teamwork instills cohesion and confidence in his fellow Soldiers. They know he will be by their side regardless of the situation. More than any Soldier in the company, Pfc. Byrd values the bond of

trust between Soldiers, and we want to honor him for that."

Staff Sgt. Nicholas Hughes, platoon sergeant and sergeant of the guard for the entry control point, said Byrd's enthusiasm and loyalty inspired his fellow platoon members and contributed to overall success.

"Pfc. Byrd showed great pride and enthusiasm in every task he undertook, producing excellent results while serving as a sentry at the entry control point," said Hughes, a Batesville, Miss., native. "As a result, he has earned the

respect of his peers and superiors."

Hughes detailed some of the ways Byrd distinguished himself.

"He's one of my guys who gets it done without being told," he said. "For instance, he gets up an hour early every day in order to perform preventive maintenance checks and services on the squad's assigned vehicle. We've got a lot of top-notch Soldiers, but Pfc. Byrd is a cut above. He has initiative. Many times, I (didn't) have to ask for volunteers for some task because he was already out there doing it. He's demonstrated his future potential as a leader by serving with great success in several leadership positions, including sergeant of the guard (an NCO position) at the ECP."

Staff Sgt. Kevin L. Brown, Byrd's squad leader, made some of the same observations.

"Pfc. Byrd takes pride in being a part of the ECP at Q-West," said Brown, a Hernando, Miss., native. "His loyalty is among the highest of any Soldier in the company. He has taken on the role of sergeant of the guard on several occasions. He has mastered all of the duties and tasks assigned to him. His peers call him 'Command Sgt. Maj. Byrd' due to his high work ethic, high level of motivation and determination to get the job done."

Byrd said he was moved by the recognition.

"This makes me feel good, being singled out for doing my job to the best of my ability," he said. "To me, loyalty means staying true to my country, to the Army, to my unit and to my fellow Soldiers. Being recognized for loyalty is a great honor to me."

Combat sustainment support battalion prepares for redeployment

STORY AND PHOTO BY
CAPT. DARSHAREE SAIK
15TH SUST. BDE.

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE

SPEICHER, Iraq – Soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 264th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) started the redeployment process in the last week of January, by preparing their cargo containers for shipment back to the United States.

Soldiers emptied these containers to clean out dirt and debris, the first of many steps the unit must take to send home its personal items and equipment.

In the first week of February, the containers were inspected to determine their serviceability and cleanliness.

"It feels good to finally be at the point that we are preparing to leave," said Spc. Liza Santiago, an HHC sup-

ply clerk and a Ponce, Puerto Rico, native.

Staff Sgt. Alexander Munoz, the HHC operations noncommissioned officer, platoon sergeant and an Armenia, Columbia, native, echoed Santiago's sentiments.

"It's fantastic that we are getting ready for redeployment," he said. "Being 10 months into a successful deployment, I think we're all ready to complete our mission here and get back home to our families."

Munoz is also the company's unit movement officer, and is responsible for coordinating the movement of the unit's containers back to Fort Bragg, N.C.

"My entire career as a Soldier, I have been taught to multitask," he said. "I have learned to be multifunctional and flexible. I am very fortunate to have great Soldiers and noncommissioned officers to support me in accomplishing all of my assigned duties."

The 264th CSSB has been deployed since late April 2009 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 09-11.



Sgt. Adrian Doerfer, a human resources noncommissioned officer and a Colorado Springs, Colo., native, Sgt. Jeffrey Spicer, a unit supply sergeant and a Miami native, Spc. Ashley Kouba, a unit supply clerk and a Winona, Minn., native, and Staff Sgt. Alexander Munoz, an automated logistics specialist and an Armenia, Columbia, native, clean the inside of a 20-ft shipping container in preparation for redeployment.

Joint forces secure roads in Salah ad Din province, prep for pilgrimage

STORY AND PHOTO BY
1ST LT. MEGHAN E. KEEFE
37TH ENG. BN.

SALAH AD DIN PROVINCE, Iraq – Shiite Muslims began their pilgrimage to religious shrines during the observance of Arba'een Feb. 5.

In an effort to make their passage a safer one, U.S. forces partnered with the Iraqi Army to engage locals and clear the streets of hazards.

Arba'een, which means 40 in Arabic, is the 40th day after Ashoura, or the death of Iman Husain ibn Ali, the third imam and grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. The religious observance is known to some as the Muharram ritual and has many variations around the world.

During this time, observers make their pilgrimage to the Husyan and Abbas shrines in Karbala, Iraq, by traveling on roadways that, in the past, have posed threats of improvised explosive devices.

Soldiers with the 37th Engineer Battalion – Joint Task Force Eagle, out of Fort Bragg, N.C., and 4th Brigade, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, out of Fort Riley, Kan., with the 1st Infantry Division, worked closely with Maj. Hayder, the 17th Iraqi Army Brigade operations and intelligence officer, to clear the shoulder

of Highway 1 in the Salah ad Din Province, while engaging locals about their activities.

First Lt. Curtis Fields, the 1st Platoon, B Company leader and a Junction City, Kan., native, said the purpose of the patrol is to support the primary mission of the 17th IA Bde., which is securing the safety and security of the highway.

"A joint patrol not only allows us the ability to assist them with the engineer assets, but it also serves as a public message to anyone who drives by and sees us working together," said Fields. "We hope that this shows people who travel along this highway on a daily basis that the 4th IA Div. is dedicated to keeping the public safe."

Other joint operations between A Company, 37th Eng. Bn. – JTF Eagle and the Iraqi Security Forces include civil development projects, such as the Salah ad Din Canal Campaign, with the 4th Iraqi Army Field Engineer Regiment.

"As engineers, we have the internal ability to reduce hazards imposed onto civilians, which in turn supports our partnership as we play a supporting role to the Iraqi Army's mission, by enabling their success with our capabilities," said Capt. Jim Wade, the A Co. commander and a Nashville, Tenn., native.

During the patrol, Fields and Hayder walked along the shoulder of the road as cars passed honking their horns and people waved.

With mine detectors searching for any



A Soldier with A Company, 37th Engineer Brigade uses a mine detector to clear the shoulder of Highway 1 in the Salah ad Din province, in northern Iraq. U.S. forces and the Iraqi Army work to secure the highway of all threats before the Ashoura' pilgrimage Feb. 5, during which civilians will travel along the highway.

metal objects that could potentially pose a threat, the engineers moved ahead of Fields' platoon of infantrymen. In the patrol was Fritz, the German shepherd military search dog and his handler, working as team to uncover threats that would otherwise go unseen by Soldiers.

Before reaching their end point, Fields and Hayder met farmers tending crops and digging irrigation ditches. One elderly man distinguished himself as a shaykh and Hayder shook his hand

and introduced himself, while making conversation about local activity and the upcoming pilgrimage.

Hayder said he believes in the partnership and believes missions such as this can be attributed to the teamwork between his Soldiers.

"The partnership is a really great opportunity," he said. "While we support many missions in Iraq, one relationship we hope to continue to build is the partnership with U.S. forces."

Local trucking company assists small Army bases

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. KEITH S. VAN KLOMPENBERG
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION SYKES, Iraq – The small bases in Iraq, known as spokes to the larger bases' hubs, survive on logistics and sustainment support from those nearby

hubs.

The Soldiers at forward operating bases Nimir and Heider in northern Iraq rely on the 506th Quartermaster Company and Elta Company trucks at Contingency Operating Location Sykes, Iraq, to maintain mission readiness.

Ali Can Birbiri, the COL Sykes site manager with Elta Co., said he came to Iraq from Adana, Turkey, in 2005, and has been working with Soldiers at COL Sykes since 2006.

"I do weekly supply runs at Heider and Nimir," he said.

Birbiri said his main focus is with the class one, or food and water, warehouse.

His team delivers food supplies to the outlying bases that are too small to have their own warehouses, he said.

Although Sykes is a hub for the nearby outposts, it lacks some resources itself, said Birbiri. He said the Soldiers at the class one warehouse did not have enough storage space, so he provided truck trailers for them to use. Birbiri and Elta Company have also lent trailers to Nimir and Heider for their food storage, he said.

The Elta team at Sykes consists of Birbiri, 13 drivers and three mechanics, all working closely with the Logistics Task Force of the 506th Quartermaster Company, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

"They're helping me and I'm helping them," said Birbiri.

Because so much of the mission depends on reliable transportation and Elta trucks move out in convoys with trucks from the 506th, Birbiri's mechanics work alongside the Army mechanics.

"All of the motorpool is working together," he said.

Staff Sgt. Cristian Solano, the platoon sergeant with the Logistics Task Force of the 506th and an Elizabethtown, N.J., native, said the partnership has been beneficial to both sides, and Birbiri's professionalism has played a large role in their mission success.

"He takes a lot of pride in his work," said Solano. "Our trucks never go down."

Solano said Birbiri does more than just supervise his team and act as a liaison between them and their military partners; he has also gone out on nearly every convoy.

Birbiri said he does his best to help out the Army, and the Army has done



Ali Can Birbiri, the site manager for Elta Company, stands next to his fleet of trucks at Contingency Operating Location Sykes, Iraq. Birbiri came to Iraq in 2005 from Adana, Turkey, and assists the 506th Quartermaster Company in delivering food and supplies to small bases near Sykes.

a great job looking after his team and keeping it safe. He said he cannot recall a time when he was put in harm's way since starting the job.

"This contract started in 2005 and not one thing has happened," he said.

Provider commander meets with Wagonmaster leaders

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. MATTHEW C. COOLEY
15TH SUST. BDE. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq – Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, commander of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) out of Fort Hood, Texas, and a Mansfield, Ohio, native, participated in a 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th ESC commander's conference Feb. 4 at Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq.

Col. Larry Phelps, 15th Sust. Bde. commander and a Greenville, Ala., native, along with the commanders and command sergeants major of each Wagonmaster battalion, met with the general to receive his guidance, brief him on battalion-level affairs and ask questions.

The conference was the second of its kind since the 15th took over U.S. military logistical operations for northern Iraq in October, said Capt. Elaina Hill, the 15th Sust. Bde. adjutant and a Fairbanks, Alaska, native.

During the first meeting, the commanders discussed the effects of the transfer of authority from the 16th Sustainment Brigade to the 15th and future operations, said Hill. This second conference was necessary, as four additional battalions have come under Wagonmaster control since the start of the new year, she said.

The conference was designed to ensure that the 13th ESC's priorities were clear and implemented at the



Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz (right), commander of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) out of Fort Hood, Texas, and a Mansfield, Ohio, native, and Col. Larry Phelps, 15th Sust. Bde. commander and a Greenville, Ala., native, along with the commanders and command sergeants major of each Wagonmaster battalion, participate in the 15th's commander's conference Feb. 4 at Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq.

battalion level, with direct and personal guidance from Wentz, said Lt. Col. Joe Dixon, commander of 260th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sust. Bde. and Chicago native.

"(It's) so he can look battalion commanders and command sergeants major in the eye," he said.

Dixon said one of the main topics of discussion was the upcoming draw-down, and movement of equipment

and personnel throughout Iraq in the coming months.

The brigade's battalions are spread throughout an area roughly the size of the state of Minnesota, Phelps said in a message to Wagonmaster families and Soldiers in January.

"It's great having the whole Wagonmaster team together at one time," Dixon said.

During the conference, Lt. Col. Peter Haas, commander of the 49th

Transportation Battalion, 15th Sust. Bde. and a Fleetwood, Pa., native, expressed to Wentz why he felt the conference was a good idea.

"(We) get a chance to talk to you about some things that we don't normally," he said.

Wentz agreed.

The battalion commanders and command sergeants major all briefed the general and voiced their concerns.

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New oil service center opens at JBB

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. KEITH S. VAN KLOMPENBERG
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Officials with the mayor's cell and Shaykh Shehab Ahmed Al-Tmime celebrated the opening of the new oil service center with a ribbon cutting ceremony Feb. 8 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

The expanded service center moved from the edge of the base to a more central location off Pennsylvania Avenue.

"Where they are now is known as the vehicle maintenance complex," said Sgt. Maj. Charles Scriven, the senior enlisted adviser with the Iraqi-Based Industrial Zone, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Columbia, S.C., native.

The move was made to accommodate a changing contract with the Iraqi-owned center, said Air Force Master Sgt. Alan Chaney, the contract officer representative for the Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing.

Chaney, a Baltimore native, said the new contract will expand the center's

work to cover all non-tactical vehicles at JBB, so the new location had to be larger. They will slowly expand their service from 600 vehicles to 1,700 per year, said Chaney.

"We moved to this location in preparation for that expansion," he said.

In the few days since the opening, the workers have already seen business pick up, most likely due to convenience, said Chaney.

"This is a bit more user-friendly and easy to find," he said.

The locally-owned oil service center provides level 10 maintenance, which includes oil changes, tire rotations, windshield wiper changes and other basic maintenance, said Scriven.

The construction of the new site involved a partnership with the Air Force, Army civil engineers and support from the IBIZ.

The IBIZ acts as a liaison between the base and local businesses, said Scriven.

"Our mission is to provide a safe working environment for the Iraqis," he said.

Operating a business on a U.S. military base can be beneficial to the shaykhs, workers and the local economy in general, Scriven said.



Naser Bed Yassem, a local Iraqi and employee of the oil service center, works on a truck at the center's newly opened location in the vehicle maintenance complex Feb. 8 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

"One: it provides jobs; two: it allows them a safe environment; and three: this is experience," he said.

Scriven said the IBIZ provides this work to the local nationals to help them succeed after the U.S. military is gone.

"There still are going to be vehicles, so there will be a need for maintenance on vehicles, a need for fuel," he said. "These are the kind of services we have that are being provided by the Iraqi citizens."

Fuel flows for first time at new Adder fuel farm

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. 1ST CLASS TAD BROWNING
36TH SUST. BDE. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, Iraq – Under the light of a full moon, with temperatures in the mid 30s, KBR, Inc. employees stood by as the first fuel truck arrived at the newly constructed fuel farm Jan. 28 at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, to begin fueling operations.

Col. Sean Ryan, commander of the 36th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Cedar Park, Texas, native, described the process as "a vision, a concept, a plan and a reality."

Lt. Col. Darrell Debish, the support operations officer with the 36th Sust. Bde., said the first few drops of fuel in the motor gas bags were the culmination of 48 months of planning and execution.

"We finally made it happen on this historic day," he said. "It's definitely a milestone. We plan on having 64,000 gallons of MOGAS on the ground in the bags (today), ready to be tested and eventually used throughout theater."

Debish said after the fuel trucks completed filling the bags with the initial 64,000 gallons, that fuel would sit for a designated amount of time and samples would be taken to a lab to be tested. When the lab clears the sample, the fuel bags will be certified as operational.

Lt. Cmdr. Brock Harrill, officer in charge of U.S. Navy Petroleum Detachment, was on sight to oversee the petroleum operations. Harrill works with the 36th Sust. Bde. and the contractors.

He said roughly nine to 12 months ago, they graded and leveled the area, built access roads and put in the lighting.

Harrill said the berms, the bladders and the assembly of the fuel systems began roughly three months ago.

"This has been a hugely successful construction effort," he said. "The Red Horse construction squadron from the Air Force came out and did the bulk of this construction in a 10 to 12 week period."

Harrill said it was a challenge to put together enough materials to assemble the farm because there is a very large demand for war material in Afghanistan, where the emphasis of the war effort is, under the direction of Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander of United States Central Command.

"As we have been able to disassemble other fuel farms around the country and downsize, we're able to get those parts and bring them here and assemble this," said Harrill. "It's a very slow and cumbersome process. Another challenge is operating two fuel farms in parallel, Adder and Cedar (II), with basically the same group of people. That's extremely difficult."

Debish said some hoses do not fit and some couplings are bad, representing typical problems in a new operation.

The dysfunctional pieces are not revealed until pressure builds in a hose, he said.

"The biggest thing was making sure the pump was running, making sure you have your safety stuff out here ... and actually getting the fuel through three or four different manufacturer's hoses," said Debish. "If they are all Goodyear, that's great. If they are all B.F. Goodrich, that's fine. But once you get it working, it's like dominoes, they all fall."

As the bags fill, the fuel farm will begin to serve all of southern Iraq, he said.

"The fuel farm here is the center piece of the new Convoy Support Center Adder, which will be the main logistics and fuel hub for all of southern Iraq," said Harrill.



KBR, Inc. employees prepare to fill the first bag of motor gas Jan. 28 at the newly constructed fuel farm at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

Harrill said the fuel farm represents the most collaborated project in Iraq.

"This is a fuel farm for the Army, to be run by the Navy, built by the Air Force to give fuel to the Marines," Harrill said.

Q-West mayor cell transitions to 15th Special Troops Battalion

STORY AND PHOTO BY
STAFF SGT. ROB STRAIN
15TH SUST. BDE. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq – The Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq, mayor cell transitioned from the 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms to the Special Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) during a ceremony Feb. 1 at Q-West.

The mayor cell, which had been run by the 2/198th, is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the base.

"We have a hard job filling the boot marks left by the 2/198th," said Col. Larry Phelps, the 15th Sust. Bde. commander and a Greenville, Ala., native. "No doubt you all took a great deal of pride in how you run this place."

Phelps said the 15th was originally supposed to deploy to Contingency Operating Base Taji, Iraq, north of Baghdad, which would have been an easy sustainment mission, but when the mission moved the 15th to Q-West and made the brigade responsible for running the base, he worried about exactly how to run a COB.

Phelps said he has every confidence that the STB will be successful in its mission.

"As good as they've done, I expect better," he said. "If you're not making progress, you're sitting still, and out here, if you are sitting still, you're losing ground."

To meet the mission of the mayor cell, the 2/198th added additional Soldiers from across the state of Mississippi, said Lt. Col. Kerry Goodman, the battalion's commander and a Meridian, Miss., native.

Goodman said attitude was the most important aspect of running the mayor cell.

"You are here to make sure tenants get what they need to do their job," he said.

The mission of the mayor cell is an important one, even if it is not what many people think of as Army related, said Lt. Col. William B. Smith Jr., the outgoing mayor with the 2/198th and a Hattiesburg, Miss., native.

"Engaged leadership is the key," Smith said.

Lt. Col. Paula Lodi, the STB commander and incoming mayor, thanked the 2/198th for their hard work, adding that this is the best base she has been to.



Lt. Col. William B. Smith Jr., the outgoing Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq, mayor, and Lt. Col. Paula Lodi, the commander of the Special Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), exchange coins to symbolize the transition from the outgoing mayor to the incoming mayor during a ceremony Feb. 1 at Q-West.

Taking on the mayor mission is a change for the STB, which is responsible for 1,200 Soldiers, from Basra in southern Iraq to Habur Gate on the northern border with Turkey, said Lodi, a Franklin, Mass., native.

"Change is inevitable, but growth is optional," she said. "Change is what we owe this theater, growth is what we get to take back home with us. We're going to run with it, we're going to continue to set the standard."

Iraqi company finishes contract with US Army

STORY AND PHOTO BY SPC. CORY GROGAN
41ST IBCT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Editor's note: The Iraqi engineer quoted in this story asked that his last name not be used for security reasons.

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, Iraq – Lora Company, an Iraqi contracting business, has worked with the U.S. Army for five years.

Lora Company finished its contract with the Oregon Army National Guard's 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), with a lunch Jan. 28 at Contingency Operating Base Adder in southern Iraq, where the company has done more than 50 projects, said Abbdallah, an engineer with Lora.

The company is based out of Iraq's fourth largest city, An Nassiryah, which is just outside of Adder. Abbdallah said the Army has taught the company a lot about contracting work.

"We have learned a lot about construction and business has been pretty good," he said.

Sgt. Joel Ortega, a supply assistant with the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a San Juan, Puerto Rico, native, observes an engineer at work from the Lora Company out of An Nassiryah, Iraq, Jan. 27 at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.



Lora Company won a contract that was bid on by 11 Iraqi companies to put tile down in base offices and erect three, 30-foot flagpoles for the brigade to display the United States, Oregon and 41st IBCT flags.

Sgt. Joel Ortega, a supply assistant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 41st IBCT and a San Juan, Puerto Rico, native, said there has been a good working relationship between the Iraqis and the members of the 41st IBCT.

"With the materials, tools and equipment they have, they really do decent work," Ortega said. "You tell them what you want and they go and do it."

Capt. Ian Baierlipp, an engineer officer with the 41st IBCT and a Keller, Texas, native, said Joint Contracting Command – Iraq will handle all of the contracts at Contingency Operating Base Adder with the Iraqi companies, and that the learning process and development of the companies and workers is going to make the transition much smoother than it would otherwise have been.

He believes that working with the Army and JCCI has given many Iraqis some skills that will benefit their economy in the long run.

"The best way for the Iraqis to improve is to be held to a standard and not to let the standard go; it's good to have local nationals who are here doing good things," said Baierlipp.

Change of command ceremony held at Adder

By CAPT. VERONICA JORDAN
36TH SUST. BDE.

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, Iraq – The Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 36th Special Troops Battalion, 36th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), held a change of command ceremony Jan. 30 at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

Speakers at the HHC change of command ceremony included Capt. Michael J. Ford, outgoing commander and a Paris, Texas, native, Capt. Arthur Smith, incoming commander and a Frisco, Texas, native, Lt. Col. Marvin Johnson, 36th STB commander and a San Antonio native, and Col. Sean Ryan, 36th Sustainment Brigade commander and a Cedar Park, Texas, native.

Ford said the change of command was a humbling, bittersweet moment

for him. Standing in front of the unit for the last time as the commander brought with it fond memories of the previous 18 months.

“I leave hoping in some small way I influenced (each of) them to be a better Soldier, and person,” he said.

Before assuming command of HHC, 36th Sust. Bde., Smith served as the 36th Sust. Bde. special operations section, brigade ammunition’s officer.

“The Nightrider Soldiers looked spectacular standing in formation, very impressive,” said Smith. “I feel very privileged to be able to take command of such of a great organization, and look forward to the next couple of months where I will be able to bring the outstanding Soldiers of the 36th back home.”

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Johnson presented Ford with the Army Commendation Medal for his exceptional service in training, preparing and transporting the HHC 36th Sust. Bde. safely into the Iraqi theater.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Tad Browning

Lt. Col. Marvin Johnson, commander of 36th Special Troops Battalion, 36th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), passes the company flag to Capt. Arthur Smith, signifying his assumption of command of Headquarters and Headquarters Company Jan. 30 at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

Operations slated to begin at expanded central receiving, shipping point

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC. MICHAEL V. CAMACHO
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – The Joint Base Balad, Iraq, Central Receiving and Shipping Point is slated to begin operations at its new, 20-acre site, Feb. 15, after roughly five months of preparation.

The CRSP expanded to accommodate the movement and removal of equipment throughout Iraq, as the upcoming drawdown of U.S. troops and equipment approaches, said Capt. Jason Vivian, officer in charge of transportation with the 80th Ordnance Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary). The expanded site will contain almost triple the amount of cargo than the old site, said Vivian, a South Fork, Pa., native.

“Their current area can only hold so much,” he said.

JBB will be a major operational hub during the drawdown, and is already a major cargo processing site, he said.

The new location is close to the container repair yard, the onward movement yard and the redistribution property assistance team. The proximity increases overall operational efficiency through more fluid movement, said Vivian.

This creates a centralized area for processing cargo and retrograding materials, and saves at least an hour



A Soldier looks on as a rough terrain container handler picks up an empty container and loads it on a flatbed truck at the Receiving and Shipping Point yard at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. The CRSP will be relocated to an expanded location, tripling its cargo capacity.

of travel time, he said.

Overall, the new CRSP can accommodate a higher cargo capacity, said 2nd Lt. Gabriel West, officer in charge of the JBB CRSP with the 159th Sea-port Operations Company, 80th Ord. Bn., 15th Sust. Bde., 13th ESC.

“We’ll have more space and be able to handle responsible withdrawal op-

erations more effectively,” said West, an Allentown, Pa., native.

He said the unit expects to process considerably more cargo in the coming months after the national elections.

Despite its size limitations, the old CRSP site averaged 6,000 pieces of cargo per month, said West. In September, it processed a record 8,000

pieces of cargo, he said.

The CRSP processes all classes of supplies, with the exception of ammunition, said West.

“Our mission is to receive, stage, upload, download and transship unit equipment, retrograde equipment, containers and intra-theater cargo,” he said. “In addition, we oversee the (Empty Container Collection Point).”

The CRSP will process the containers the ECCP receives from the CRY. West said the CRY processes roughly 3,000 containers a month, after which they are redistributed.

The additional space grants more freedom of movement to all vehicles and personnel in the CRSP, said West.

“There have been times when we’ve had to rearrange cargo in the yard because we ran out of room in certain areas,” he said. “This will not be an issue in the new yard.”

The trailer transfer point will also be relocated and expanded in the CRSP, said West. The TTP is a staging area for convoys to drop off filled trailers, pick up empty ones and continue on their route, he said.

West said the additional staging lanes will also allow more cargo to be uploaded or downloaded from each convoy.

“Our yard operations will be more efficient, because we’ll have more space to stage convoys,” he said. “We’ll have the capabilities to process multiple convoys at a time without slowing down our operation.”

Mississippi Guardsmen visit ancient ruins

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
CAPT. MURRAY SHUGARS
2/198TH CAB

KHAN NAJMA, NINEWA PROVINCE, Iraq – Mississippi Army National Guard Soldiers visited the ruins of a well-preserved fortress near the village of Khan Najma, in Ninewa province, Feb. 3, while returning to Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq, from a mission.

Soldiers with A Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms, 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), the Q-West force protection company out of Hernando, Miss., explored the site which, above its single gate, bears an inscription from the Koran so worn down that three interpreters could not fully decipher it.

“We pass by ancient ruins a lot during missions, but we don’t usually have a chance to stop and see them up close,” said Capt. Drew Clark, commander of A Co. and a Madison, Miss., native. “It’s good for the Soldiers to see these places because they are part of a rich cultural heritage. Seeing them puts things in perspective and helps us understand the long history behind the current situation.”

Taking time to study the historical landscape is worth the effort, said 1st Sgt. John L. Beasley, a Hernando, Miss., native.

“When we first got here, we were pretty busy and didn’t have much of a chance to stop and see some of these places we pass near,” said Beasley. “It’s good to stop and look around. This is the kind of experience that the Soldiers will never forget. It’s a firsthand education instead of seeing pictures in a book, and I doubt you would see a place like this in most history books, because it was prob-



Spc. Jason N. Tressler, a gun truck driver with A Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms, 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), the Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq, force protection company out of Hernando, Miss., and a Memphis, Tenn., native, walks the western ramparts of an old fortress, which stands intact on a ridge near the village of Khan Najma, in Ninewa province, Iraq. Members of Tressler’s company, a Mississippi Army National Guard unit, visited the site while returning from a mission, Feb. 3.

ably a minor outpost.”

The site is impressively constructed and located, said Staff Sgt. Kevin L. Brown, a sergeant of the guard for an entry control point.

“It’s amazing that this structure is still standing, especially in a war zone,” said Brown, a Hernando, Miss., native. “The people who planned and built this fortress knew what they were doing. They obviously built it solid, or it wouldn’t still be standing, and they gave careful thought to its strategic location. One of the things that got me most was standing on the wall and be-

ing able to see for miles around. It was amazing how far you could see. The builders couldn’t have found a better location than this because this ridge commands the region as far as the eye can see.”

Spc. Daniel R. Burke, a gun truck driver and an Apalachicola, Fla., native, said he experienced a moment of connection with the warriors who once manned the ramparts.

“It’s fascinating to stumble on places like this,” said Burke. “You can be rolling through the desert, and nothing’s around but the empty landscape.

Then you stumble on something so magnificent, so well preserved. The structure itself is

amazing. I could imagine the people who lived here, the Soldiers, and it gave me a strange feeling, as if they had left a few years ago instead of hundreds of years. It made history seem so real, like the past was not so long ago.”

Visiting such sites can offer U.S. Soldiers a better historical perspective, said Staff Sgt. Michael A. Barnes, a gun truck commander and a Boonville, Miss., native.

“It shows that Iraqi culture goes back to the beginning of civilization,” said Barnes. “It makes you realize how young America is.”

Spc. Jeffery D. Thompson, a radio operator and a Wyattte, Miss., native, said the architecture was fascinating.

“I paid attention to the unique architecture, the way it was built,” said Thompson. “It obviously has great structural integrity or it wouldn’t still be standing after all this time. Seeing how the builders laid out the fortress was also interesting, with the stables and barracks and what might have been offices and even a latrine – that was real interesting. All the rooms had domed or arched ceilings, and I’m not used to seeing that.”

Thompson said he thought the site should be protected and studied.

“This is an important place, not just this place but the whole region,” said Thompson. “People all over the world think of this region as the ‘motherland,’ the place where it all began, and it’s important to preserve the archeological sites.”

Sgt. Seth A. Bloodworth, a truck commander with A Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms, 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), the Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq, force protection company out of Hernando, Miss. and a Lake Cormorant, Miss., native, rests at the northwest corner rampart of an old fortress, which stands intact on a ridge near the village of Khan Najma, in Ninewa province, Iraq. Members of Bloodworth’s company, a Mississippi Army National Guard unit, visited the site while returning from a mission, Feb. 3.



Providers train replacements in Italy

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC. MICHAEL V. CAMACHO
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Two advisers with the 49th Transportation Battalion (Movement Control) traveled from Joint Base Balad, Iraq, to Vicenza, Italy, to assist in a four-day pre-deployment exercise with the 14th Transportation Battalion.

The 14th Trans. Bn., out of Vicenza, is slated to replace the 49th Trans. Bn. in April and become the headquarters movement control battalion in charge of sustainment operations in Iraq, said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Donnie Black, a mobility warrant officer with the 49th Trans. Bn., 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Sweet Water, Ala., native. The exercise was designed to train and certify the 14th Trans. Bn. Soldiers for their new mission, said Black.

With only six movement control battalions in the active Army, they serve a specialized function for the sustainment commands they serve under in theater, he said.

A MCB manages the transportation assets that move on the roads from base to base in Iraq, said Black. This includes



While transportation companies move cargo, the movement control battalions and teams manage traffic flow, verify cargo that needs to be moved, and ensure quality control.

managing traffic, prioritizing what cargo needs to be moved and facilitating the quality control of cargo throughout the country, he said.

Capt. Allison Bergstrom, the highway traffic division chief with the 49th and a Minneapolis native, said the exercise simulated a four-day MCB mission in support

of sustainment operations.

“For four full days, the 14th acted as the MCB (in Iraq),” she said. “They followed the same battle rhythm we follow here. It’s not going to teach them everything from A to Z about transportation. It’s meant to get their feet in the water so when they get here they don’t come in blind.”

Bergstrom said she and Black watched over the 14th Trans. Bn. as the unit adapted to the type of mission it would have in Iraq.

“We were there, standing behind them every step ... and there to answer their questions,” she said. “We were there to give them an initial picture of what it is they’re going to be doing as the (only) MCB in Iraq.”

Black and Bergstrom met with the leadership and operation staff to discuss the unit’s mission, said Bergstrom.

“We gave our recommendations on how they should manage their people with the numbers they have,” she said.

Black said normal transportation battalions have truck companies under them, but MCBs only have movement control teams.

“They support the sustainment brigades and (combat sustainment support battalions) that control the (transportation) assets,” said Black.

The mission in Iraq is an ever-evolving one, said Bergstrom. The operation of MCBs has changed to meet the needs of the Warfighters and the redevelopment of Iraq, she said.

The 14th Soldiers were overwhelmed at first, but as the missions continued, they became more knowledgeable and comfortable with MCB operations, she said.

Joint Base Balad African American/Black History Month Observance Luncheon

MWR East
Feb. 19, 2010
11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Lunch will be provided
Essay/Art Contest Awards

Guest Speaker:

Major Bernard Brogan
72d ESB

Heritage & Horizons:
The Legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen

264th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion conducts communications training

STORY AND PHOTO BY
1ST LT. GENARO MORONES
15TH SUST. BDE.

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE
SPEICHER, Iraq – The
264th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) communications section, commonly referred to as section 6, trained more than 180 drivers and truck commanders on operator-level communication tasks for three days beginning Jan. 21 at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

Each of the three days featured a primary block of instruction. Block I introduced participants to basic radio parts and procedures. Block II, taught by Spc. De'Aaron Green, a signal support specialist and a Baltimore native, helped users become familiar with encrypting radio communications.

Spc. Ryan McCauley, an information systems operator and a Raleigh, N.C., native, presented Block III, giving tips and techniques for radio maintenance and troubleshooting. McCauley stressed the importance of performing proper preventative maintenance checks and services prior to departing for missions, emphasizing cables, connections and cleanliness.

This training was not a “check-the-box” mandate, said McCauley. It was a hands-on, no nonsense, how-to presentation designed to address the specific communication problems encountered on convoy missions, he said.

Each day of training ended at dusk, with participants demonstrating their comprehension by successfully filling a



Spc. Ryan McCauley, an information systems operator with the 264th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion and a Raleigh, N.C., native, instructs his fellow Soldiers on radio maintenance and troubleshooting. The 264th CSSB, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) communications section, commonly referred to as section 6, trained more than 180 drivers and truck commanders on operator-level communication tasks for three days beginning Jan. 21 at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

radio using an AN/PYQ-10 Simple Key Loader in less than five minutes.

Spc. Herbert Rock, a signal support specialist with the 1083rd Transporta-

tion Company and a Monroe, La., native, said he was thankful for the training.

“Normally, people come to me and

ask me to fill their radio,” Rock said. “Now, they are coming up to me and asking me for an SKL so they can fill their own radio.”

Telling the Providers Story from all across Iraq



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Force protection uniform postures

	IBA	Kevlar	Uniform	Conduct PT
U1 	Accessible within 10 minutes.	Accessible within 10 minutes.	DCU/ACU/ service equivalent. PT uniform allowed for PT or off duty and can be worn in DFAC/PX.	No restrictions.
U2 	Worn when outdoors for specified time or event.	Worn when outdoors for specified time or event.	DCU/ACU/ service equivalent. PT uniform allowed for PT only and cannot be worn in DFAC/PX.	Restriction: PT only in hardened facilities. Can run with IBA and Kevlar.
U3 	Worn outside hardened facility.	Worn outside hardened facility.	Same as U2. DCU/ACU/ service equivalent. PT uniform allowed for PT only and cannot be worn in DFAC/PX.	Restriction: PT only in hardened facilities. Can run with IBA and Kevlar.
U4 	Worn.	Worn.	Same as U3, but with ballistic goggles and combat earplugs.	Not authorized.

155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team hosts Taji-wide marriage enrichment seminar

BY SGT. JOHN STIMAC
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE TAJI, Iraq – The 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team's unit ministry council hosted a base-wide, marriage-enrichment seminar and cookout Feb. 11 in the Warrior Chapel at Contingency Operating Base Taji, Iraq.

The seminar marks the last event for the unit ministry team, as the 155th HBCT, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) sets to re-deploy in the beginning of March.

Maj. Terry Partin, brigade chaplain with the 155th and a Richton, Miss., native, said the seminar's goal was to encourage Soldiers to think about their marriages and commit to them before re-deploying home.

"People change while you're gone," he said. "Spouses become more independent, have new friends and it can be tough, even for the best of marriages."

Partin said he wants people to think about their marriages and not expect an easy transition.

The event featured a showing of the



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Beverly Price

Soldiers at Contingency Operating Site Taji, Iraq, start the marriage enrichment seminar with a cookout with food prepared by Staff Sgt. Geoff C. Wagner, the chaplain assistant noncommissioned officer in charge with the 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team and a Saltillo, Miss., native. After the cookout, the movie "Fireproof" was played for the guests.

movie "Fireproof," which addresses marital problems in the midst of high-stress situations.

"After the movie, we are going to give Soldiers time to talk and share their feelings and concerns for when

they re-deploy back to the states."

Staff Sgt. Geoff C. Wagner, chaplain assistant noncommissioned officer in charge with the 155th HBCT and a Saltillo, Miss., native, said the 155th hosted a barbeque to help draw more

people to the event, as it incorporated several units. He said he learned how to make Cajun-style ribs from a five-star chef, and he made them and home-made guacamole for the occasion.

Because this was the 155th's last event, they wanted to make it special, Wagner said.

Partin said they received a lot of support from the family support group in Mississippi and from the 198th Combined Arms Battalion's family support group as well.

"The family support group rallied the communities back home and they had shipped multiple copies of 'Fireproof' and other books, along with all kinds of food items," he said.

Wagner said he believes this event is special because it is family driven.

"Our last deployment, we had a very high rate of divorce among married Soldiers," he said. "Not a lot was done last time to give Soldiers tools to enrich their marriage."

Partin said Valentine's Day made this the perfect time for such an event.

"Maybe after the class, Soldiers will take the extra effort to phone their spouses or send them a gift to show their appreciation and love for them," he said.

Oregon Soldier uses civilian skills to improve convoy routes

BY SGT. CANDACE WESTLUND
41ST IBCT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, Iraq – As the scope of operations in Iraq changes, so will its convoy routes.

Sgt. Maj. Ted Carlson, the brigade operations sergeant major with the Oregon National Guard's 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Vancouver, Wash., native, was asked to be a part of a 13th ESC committee to restructure the convoy escort mission for the Iraqi Joint Operation Area.

"I was looking at the route system back in September and thought it didn't make any sense," said Col. Dan Hokanson, the 41st IBCT commander and a Keizer, Ore., native. "I asked Sgt. Maj. Carlson what FedEx would do to deliver packages, and to implement that plan

into a proposal to send to the 13th ESC."

Hokanson's vision and Carlson's plan of action led to a committee, formed in November 2009.

"Carlson's expertise is unmatched, and we needed his vision to improve how we operate," Hokanson said.

Carlson said that his experience in his civilian career allowed him to make improvements to how the active Army does business.

"I was the only enlisted Soldier asked to be a part of the committee," he said.

Carlson traveled to bases and examined the dispatch system for missions, as well as the specific routes every unit used.

As a civilian, Carlson is a FedEx Corp. line haul driver, with 17 years of experience driving long routes similar to the Army convoys throughout Iraq.

"I was asked to assist with developing new routes for Soldiers in order to make their job more efficient," said Carlson. "The rest of the committee consisted of

brigade staff officers from units all over Iraq with experience in the logistical scope, giving them the responsibility of restructuring the locations of warehouses and facilitating interaction with KBR (Inc.) and the third country nationals."

Carlson said he examined the route structure and determined that having the routes look similar to how FedEx operates would be the most efficient course of action.

The routes involve a more specialized approach, as units in each area will only travel in a small hub and use a relay system to get equipment and supplies to their destinations, he said.

"The smaller route loops will allow Soldiers to become experts in their local areas," said Carlson. "They will know every pothole in the road, and it will be easier to detect changes and IED placements."

Carlson said the biggest mission in Iraq today is convoy escort. Therefore, streamlining the routes would pave

the way for the upcoming drawdown of troops because fewer people would be needed to do the work.

"Changing the transportation structure to a civilian-based system will also benefit the Iraqis after we are gone," he said. "Whether they know it or not, Soldiers are training the local national drivers during every single mission on how to run a transportation company."

Having smaller route hubs would also allow Soldiers to tailor their equipment sets, memorize the medical evacuation call signs and frequencies for their area, and have more consistency in their lives, Carlson said.

"Feb. 4 was the first trial run," he said. "We probably won't see this come to full fruition until this summer, so the unit that replaces those of us that are leaving should benefit from the work we put into this plan."

"This is what makes the National Guard special. Our civilian job expertise can help make the Army better."

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Transportation company holds 5K for Black History Month

BY SGT. RYAN TWIST
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – More than 400 service members participated in the 547th Transportation Company 5K Fun Run or Walk at Holt Stadium Feb. 5 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, in recognition of Black History Month.

Sgt. 1st Class Donald A. Winding, a personnel security detail member with the 547th Transportation Company out of Washington, Task Force 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry, 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), said United States citizens have equal opportunities because of the many races represented by the country's influential leaders.

Winding, a volunteer with the event and a Centerville, Miss., native, said Medger Evers, a black civil rights activist from Mississippi, inspired him.

Martin Luther King Jr. left a legacy in his work to secure civil rights for blacks as well, he said.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jeff Wright

Gen. Colin Powell, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff speaks via satellite to the Pentagon while visiting troops during Operation Desert Shield. Soldiers celebrating Black History Month in Iraq this year praised Powell's leadership skills

"He wanted to help mankind," said Winding.

First Sgt. Terrance A. Smith, the senior

enlisted adviser with the 547th Trans. Co., said King's ability to promote love to the people of all races remains evident in

his influence today. King had the power to influence the country.

"(King) was the single most influential person in my life," said Smith.

Winding said former President John F. Kennedy and Thurgood Marshall, the first African-American to serve on the Supreme Court, were key leaders who played an influential role in his life as well.

Lt. Col. Ellen H. Galloway, a staff psychologist with the 1908th Medical Detachment Combat Stress Control out of Topeka, Kan., said retired Gen. Colin Powell, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and secretary of state under former President George W. Bush, was the most influential black leader in her life.

Smith said he likes to put quotes from military leaders around the office for inspirational use.

A Feb. 3, New York Times article quoted Powell's address to a Senate committee in 1993, in which he said, "We have successfully mixed rich and poor, black and white, urban and rural (in the armed forces)."

Wagonmasters dedicate pavilion to fallen Soldier

STORY AND PHOTO BY
STAFF SGT. ROB STRAIN
15TH SUST. BDE. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq – Leaders with the 15th Sustainment Brigade and 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) dedicated a pavilion at Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq, to a fallen Fort Hood Soldier during a ceremony Feb. 3.

The pavilion was dedicated to retired Col. Jerry Smith, who died in a car accident in April 2009 at Fort Hood, Texas, the home station of both the 15th Sust. Bde. and the 13th ESC, said Col. Larry Phelps, the commander of the 15th Sust. Bde. and a Greenville, Ala., native.

Smith was a good friend and was spe-

cial to a lot of the units on Fort Hood, Phelps said.

Both units put a lot of labor into the pavilion, and wanted to dedicate it to the right person, said Phelps. Smith was that man, he said.

"He had the ability to make you feel at home immediately," said Phelps.

Smith took the "work hat" off to just sit around and talk, he said.

Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, the commander of the 13th ESC and a Mansfield, Ohio, native, said Smith was a great man.

"He really had a special place in his heart for all Soldiers," Wentz said.

Phelps said he hopes the memory of Smith's dedication and service will live on through the pavilion.

"We dedicate this pavilion to his memory and what he means to the unit," he said.



Command Sgt. Maj. Nathaniel Bartee Sr., the senior noncommissioned officer with the 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), Col. Larry Phelps, the commander of the 15th Sust. Bde., Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, the commander of the 13th ESC, and Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Joseph, the senior noncommissioned officer with the 13th ESC, unveil the plaque to dedicate the Smith Pavilion to deceased retired Col. Terry Smith Feb. 3 at Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq.

13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary)
"Phantom Support"

ON THE WEB



<http://www.hood.army.mil/13sce/>

Houston Texans cheerleaders sign autographs during replay of Super Bowl at Balad

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. RYAN TWIST
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

Editor's note: The cheerleaders' last names have been withheld at their request to protect their privacy.

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Though the Super Bowl aired live when most Soldiers in Iraq were asleep or on missions, Morale, Welfare and Recreation east held two replay showings for service members Feb. 8 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

At one of the showings, five Houston Texans cheerleaders performed at halftime and signed autographs for the troops.

Staff Sgt. Thomas G. Granger, a generator repair mechanic with the 631st Maintenance Company out of Starke, Fla., 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), said he returned from a four-day pass to find a flyer at the MWR east that advertised the Houston Texans cheerleaders would attend a replay of

the Super Bowl. He decided to attend the event with his fellow Soldiers while waiting to return to Contingency Operating Base Q-west, Iraq.

Granger watched the Super Bowl, got the cheerleaders' autographs and watched them perform the halftime show.

"This is good morale for all Soldiers, especially being over here in Iraq," he said.

Granger said Soldiers struggle every day with being away from families, friends and their normal daily activities. He said visits like these have a positive impact on deployed service members.

"You're over here defending your country and you get an opportunity like this," said Granger. "They come and visit and put on a show. It makes the Soldiers happy."

Larisa, a Houston Texans cheerleader, said she and her twin sister have never been anywhere abroad.

"It's just been a wonderful experience to get to talk to (service members) and to learn what they do on a day-to-day basis," she said.

Larisa said they toured bases throughout Iraq and appreciated the



Sonya, a Houston Texans cheerleader reaches for a plastic football to sign for a service member during a replay of the Super Bowl at Morale, Welfare and Recreation east Feb. 8 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. The cheerleaders signed autographs and performed a dance routine for the troops who attended the event.

opportunity to interact with Soldiers on a personal level.

Her family has a very rich tradition in the military, said Larisa, including a cousin serving in Afghanistan and another who served two tours in Iraq.

"Just to come overseas and say 'thank you' has been a great experience," she said. "All of us five cheerleaders are just honored to be here with all the Soldiers in Iraq and just want to say thank you personally."

Students reunite with hometown high school teacher at Adder

BY SGT. MATTHEW T. HIPPI
36TH SUST. BDE.

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, Iraq – Lt. Col. John Blaha, the 732nd Combat Service Support Battalion Commander, and a chemistry and physics teacher at Sparta High School in Sparta, Wis., commands and is deployed with three of his former students.

Blaha and his Soldiers gathered for a reunion Jan. 26 at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

Blaha taught at Sparta High School for 14 years. Three of his former stu-

dents – Staff Sgt. Moriah Menden, dining facility operations noncommissioned officer, Sgt. Megan Mulvaney, maintenance management NCO, and Spc. Lee Olson, a wheeled vehicle mechanic – all Sparta natives, have gone from the classroom to the battlefield to become Soldiers under his leadership.

"The biggest difference between being a teacher and being a commander to these Soldiers, is being able to see their progression from kids to adults," said Blaha. "The main change is I can have a different type of conversation with them now."

His former students shared their opinions about having a former teacher as a commander.

"If you told me back then that, 10

years from now, I would be in Iraq with Mr. Blaha, I would have told you, 'you're crazy,'" said Olson.

As a student, Menden said she never knew he was in the military.

"Although that would explain the weeks he would be gone for at a time," she said.

Blaha said his Soldiers still call him Mr. Blaha sometimes.

"As educators, we pride ourselves on getting students ready for the real world," he said. "It isn't too often that we get to see those students applying what they have learned in the classroom to actual life lessons. I may have gone from educator to commander, but my mission of teaching and setting an example has not changed."

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1. Power strips are free of debris and clothing.
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6. Room is neat and orderly

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Sudoku

The objective is to fill the 9×9 grid so each column, each row and each of the nine 3×3 boxes contains the digits from 1 to 9 only one time each.

Last week's answers

7	1	3	8	9	2	4	6	5
5	8	4	7	6	3	9	2	1
2	9	6	4	5	1	3	7	8
6	2	9	5	1	4	8	3	7
1	4	7	3	8	6	5	9	2
8	3	5	9	2	7	8	1	4
4	6	1	2	3	5	7	8	9
3	5	8	1	7	9	2	4	6
9	7	2	6	4	8	1	5	3

Level: Hard

			3				4	
5		6						
				2				7
8					7			
		5		6		9		3
	2		9				8	
	3			7				5
9			4		1		7	
		2				6		

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- Who did Joe Frazier say he wanted “like a hog wants slop?”
- Who received a reported \$25 million for a 1995 boxing match that lasted 89 seconds?
- Who was the first sports announcer to address Muhammad Ali by his Muslim name?
- What boxer successfully defended his title against George Foreman and Larry Holmes?
- What boxing promoter’s favorite expression is “Only in America?”

1. Muhammad Ali 2. Mike Tyson 3. Howard Cosell 4. Evander Holyfield 5. Don King

JB BALAD WORSHIP SERVICES

TRADITIONAL - Sunday

0200 Air Force Hospital Chapel	0930 Provider Chapel
1030 Freedom Chapel (West side)	1100 Castle Heights (Bldg. 7562)
1400 Air Force Hospital Chapel	1730 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)
2000 Air Force Hospital Chapel	

GOSPEL - Sunday

1100 MWR East Building	1200 Freedom Chapel (West Side)
1230 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)	
1900 Provider Chapel	

CONTEMPORARY - Sunday

0900 Chapel- Next Iraq/MWR East	
1030 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)	
1400 Castle Heights (Bldg. 7562)	1900 Freedom Chapel (West Side)

Wedneday

2000 Gilbert Memorial Chapel

LITURGICAL (Episcopal, Anglican, Presbyterian) - Sunday

1700 Provider Chapel

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST - Saturday

1000 Provider Chapel

CHURCH OF CHRIST - Sunday

1530 Castle Heights (Bldg. 7562)

LATTER DAY SAINTS (MORMON)- Sunday

1300 Provider Chapel	1530 Freedom Chapel (West side)
1900 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)	

MASS - Saturday

1700 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)	
2000 Freedom Chapel (West Side)	
Sunday	0830 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)
1100 Provider Chapel	1100 Air Force Hospital
Thursday	1100 Air Force Hospital
Mon., Wed., Fri.	1700 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)
Monday-Friday	1130 555th Engineer Bde. (Bldg. 7200)

JEWISH SHABBAT SERVICES- Friday

1700 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)	
Saturday	0930 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

1700 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

ISLAMIC PRAYER - Friday

1230 Provider Chapel

PAGAN/WICCAN FELLOWSHIP - Thursday

1900 The Shack

Saturday 1900 The Shack

GREEK ORTHODOX - Sunday

0900 Provider Annex

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CALL:

Gilbert Chapel: 443-7703

Provider Chapel: 433-2430

Freedom Chapel: 443-6303

JB BALAD ACTIVITIES

INDOOR POOL

Swim Lessons: Mon., Wed., - 6 p.m.

AquaTraining: Tue., Thu., - 7:30 p.m., 8:30 p.m.

EAST FIT-NESS CENTER

Open Court Volleyball: Sunday- 6 p.m.

Aerobics: Mon., Wed., - Fri., - 5:30-6:30 a.m.

Yoga Class: Mon., Fri.- 6-7 a.m.

Step Aerobics: Mon., Wed., - Fri., - 5:30 p.m.

Conditioning Training Class: Mon., Wed., - Fri., - 7:15-8 p.m.

Brazilian Jui-Jitsu: Mon., Wed., - Fri., - 8-9 p.m.

Abs-Aerobics: Tue., Thu., 6-7

a.m., 5-6 p.m.

Edge Weapons & Stick Fighting Combative Training: Tue., Thur., - Sat., - 8-10 p.m.

EAST REC-REATION CENTER

4-ball tourney: Sunday- 8 p.m.

Karaoke: Monday- 8 p.m.

Aerobics: Mon., Wed., - Fri., - 2 a.m., 8 a.m.

Swing Class: Tuesday- 8 p.m.

Table Tennis: Tuesday- 8 p.m.

Plastic Models Club: Wednesday 7 p.m.

Boxing: 9-ball tourney: Wednesday- 8 p.m.

Dungeons & Dragons: Thursday- 7:30 p.m.

Poetry Night: Thursday- 8 p.m.

6-ball tourney: Thursday- 8

p.m. Caribbean Night: Friday- 8 p.m.

Chess & Dominoes Tourney: Friday- 8 p.m.

Salsa Class: Saturday- 8:30 p.m.

Poker: Saturday- 7:30 p.m.

H6 FITNESS CENTER

Spin: Sunday- 9 a.m.

Mon., Wed., - Fri., - 2 a.m., 8 a.m.

2 p.m., 7 p.m.

Tue., Thu., - 5:45 a.m., 9 a.m., 8:30 p.m.

Saturday- 9 a.m., 7 p.m.

Boxing: Sunday- 4 p.m.

Tue., Thu., - 2 p.m.

Boot Camp: Sunday- 8:45 a.m.

Tue., Thu., - 7 p.m.

Power Abs: Mon., Tue., - 8 p.m.

Friday- 9 p.m.

CC Cross Fit: Monday- Saturday- 10:30 p.m.

Cross Fit: Mon., Wed., - Fri., - 5:45 a.m., 7 a.m., 3 p.m.

6 p.m.

Tue., Thu., - 7 a.m., 3 p.m.

Sunday- 5:45 a.m., 7 a.m., 3 p.m.

Monday- Saturday- 4:30 a.m., 4 p.m., 10 p.m.

Soccer: Tue., Thu., - 8 p.m.

Yoga: Wednesday- 8 p.m.

MACP Level 1: Friday- 8 p.m.

5 on 5 Basketball: Saturday- 8 p.m.

Green Bean Karaoke: Sun., Wed., - 7:30pm

9-ball tourney: Monday- 8 p.m.

West Rec- NISS CENTER

3 on 3 basketball tourney: Saturday- 7:30 p.m.

6 on 6 volleyball tourney: Friday- 8 p.m.

Hold'em: Mon., Fri., - 2 p.m., 8:30 p.m.

8-ball tourney: Tuesday- 2 a.m., 8:30 p.m.

Ping-pong tourney: Tuesday- 8:30 p.m.

Spades: Wednesday- 2 a.m., 8:30 p.m.

Salsa: Wednesday- 9-ball: Thursday- 2 a.m., 8:30 p.m.

Karaoke: Thursday- 8:30 p.m.

Dominoes: Saturday- 8:30 p.m.

Darts: Saturday- 8:30 p.m.

WEST REC- NISS CENTER

3 on 3 basketball tourney: Saturday- 7:30 p.m.

6 on 6 volleyball tourney: Friday- 8 p.m.

Circuit Gym

Floor hockey: Mon., Wed., - Fri., - 8-10 p.m.

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UPCOMING SPORTS ON AFN



Thursday 02/18/10

Wednesday Night Hoops: Notre Dame @ Louisville, Tape Delayed 4 a.m. AFN/sports
Wednesday Night Hoops: Texas @ Missouri, Tape Delayed 6 a.m. AFN/sports
2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games: Men’s Curling-USA vs. Denmark, Live 9 a.m. AFN/sports
Denver Nuggets @ Cleveland Cavaliers, Live 5 p.m. AFN/ xtra

Friday 02/19/10

Thursday Night Showcase: Syracuse @ Georgetown, Tape Delayed 4 a.m. AFN/sports
Thursday Night Showcase: Pittsburgh @ Marquette, Tape Delayed 6 a.m. AFN/sports
2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games: Women’s Curling-USA vs. Russia, Live 9 a.m. AFN/sports
NBA Friday: Dallas Mavericks @ Orlando Magic, Live 5 p.m. AFN/ xtra

Saturday 02/20/10

Miami Heat @ Memphis Grizzlies, Tape Delayed 12 a.m. AFN/ sports
Atlanta Hawks @ Phoenix Suns, Tape Delayed 4 a.m. AFN/ sports
2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games: Men’s Curling-USA vs. Sweden, Live 9 a.m. AFN/sports
Florida @ Ole Miss, Live 9 a.m. AFN/ xtra

Sunday 02/21/10

Academy Basketball on AFN: Army @ Navy, Tape Delayed 12 a.m. AFN/xtra
Oklahoma City Thunder @ New York Knicks, Tape Delayed 4 a.m. AFN/sports
Kentucky @ Vanderbilt, Tape Delayed 5 a.m. AFN/xtra
Sacramento Kings @ Los Angeles Clippers, Tape Delayed 6:30a.m. AFN/sports

Monday 02/22/10

NASCAR Sprint Cup Series: Auto Club 500 (Auto Club Speedway, Fontana, CA), Tape Delayed 12 a.m. AFN/sports
2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games: Men’s Ice Hockey-Canada vs. USA, Tape Delayed 5:30 a.m. AFN/sports
UFC 110: Nogueira vs Velasquez, Tape Delayed 7 a.m. AFN/ xtra
West Virginia @ UConn, Live 4 p.m. AFN/ sports

Tuesday 02/23/10

Chicago Bulls @ Washington Wizards, Tape Delayed 12 a.m. AFN/sports
Indiana Pacers @ Dallas Mavericks, Tape Delayed 4 a.m. AFN/ sports
2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games: Men’s Ice Hockey-Elimination Game, Live 12 a.m. AFN/sports

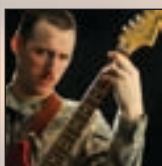
Wednesday 02/24/10

Georgetown @ Louisville, Tape Delayed 12 a.m. AFN/sports
Tennessee @ Florida, Tape Delayed 2 a.m. AFN/sports
Phoenix Suns @ Oklahoma City Thunder, Tape Delayed 7:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games: Men’s Ice Hockey-Quarterfinal, Live 12 p.m. AFN/ prime pacific

Arts & Entertainment

Built to Spill is built to last

BY SGT. KEITH S. VAN KLOMPENBERG
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



Built to Spill recently released its seventh studio album, and I was hesitant to buy it.

They are one of my favorite bands, but if you have read my other music reviews, you know I have been very disappointed in the follow-up albums of some of my favorite artists.

This is not the case with Built to Spill's "There is No Enemy." I can breathe a sigh of relief because this album is fantastic.

The band has been active since 1992 and Doug Martsch, the man behind Built to Spill, is considered by many to

be the father of the Pacific Northwest indie scene. Bands like Modest Mouse and Death Cab for Cutie would not exist if it weren't for Martsch and his sound.

The band has gone through several lineup changes, but it's hard to notice because Martsch is really the heart and soul of the group. There is very little collaboration, more like a group working to realize Martsch's vision.

Though many fans consider Built to Spill's 1993 release, "There's Nothing Wrong With Love," to be its best, the band evolved a bit with every effort. Each release is more musically challenging than the last and focuses more and more on extended guitar solos and instrumental breaks.

This is really what separates Martsch from most indie-rock bands. He is an

absolute master of the guitar, layering three to four complicated arrangements at once without sounding like he's showing off. If there is one thing Martsch is not, it's a showoff. I have read countless interviews where Martsch talks about being uncomfortable with his voice and his guitar abilities. It's clear he is lacking some confidence, but I think it adds to the honesty of his voice and his music.

"There is No Enemy" starts out in familiar territory, but by the second track they are already in new territory. "Hindsight" is one of the album's best tracks and has a great steel guitar mixed with chunky overdriven riffs over the jangly sound of Martsch's Strat. Martsch's voice is high pitched and doubled as usual, and his lyrics are thoughtful yet often humorous.

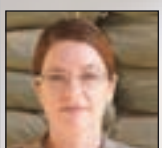
The guitar is the real winner here. If you enjoy rock guitars, not metal, but real rock, I think you will love Built to Spill. Hearing the evolution of his work over the years and reading his thoughts on playing is a real inspiration to me as a wannabe guitarist.

It is hard to pick the real standout tracks on this album as they are all good, but if you want to buy a track or two online as a sample, try "Hindsight," "Good Ol' Boredom" and "Pat."

If you trust me at all, buy the album now. If you are new to the band and want to check out some other albums, start with "There is Nothing Wrong with Love," then move on to "Keep it Like a Secret" and "You in Reverse." Maybe it's better to just pick up the entire catalog and never look back.

'Ninja Assassin' gore with a side order of Kung Fu

BY SGT. 1ST CLASS AANGI MUELLER
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES 1ST SERGEANT



"Ninja Assassin" is a great representation of everything you could want from a Kung Fu movie: intense martial arts training, blood, the powerful and demanding Sensei Master Ozunu (Shô Kosugi, a 1980s Ninja movie veteran), fighting, blood, tragic love interest, blood, throwing stars, Japanese swords, fighting spears, claws, knives and, did I mention, blood?

I wonder what amount of the overall "Ninja Assassin" budget was dedicated to fake blood and dubbed

splattering noises. This movie made scenes in "Kill Bill," look like they skimped on the ketchup.

"Ninja Assassin" was designed to be vigorously enjoyed as only over the top violence can be. The audience laughed and chattered as nameless bodies exploded into lumps of gore.

Our hero Raizo (Rain, a.k.a. Jung Jihoon) was sexy enough to elicit immediate female attention, and the probable idolatry of teen girls around the globe, but bad enough that even the guys had to admire the scars. Raizo ("East of Eden") carried a small arsenal of weapons, along with a nasty little knife on a chain that I've never seen before, but it was used to impressive effect. Our boy is bad.

The story follows two paths. Raizo breaks free from the Ozunu assassin clan after a tragedy and becomes a hunted man around the same time that Interpol agent Mika Corretti (Naomie Harris) starts researching the money trail surrounding recent murders. The juxtaposition of the two storylines gives the plot a few surprise twists to keep your interest moving. Although it was easily predicted from the trailers, Raizo and Corretti ("Pirates of the Caribbean") end up working together and the manner in which it plays out was cleverly planned.

The storyline was better than the typical formula for the genre.

The acting by all parties was not

terribly distracting, but that is about the best I can give it credit for.

The directing and camera work were decent and easy to watch. The opening scene in a gangland den sets the stage well and fun scenes, angles and backgrounds are scattered throughout the movie.

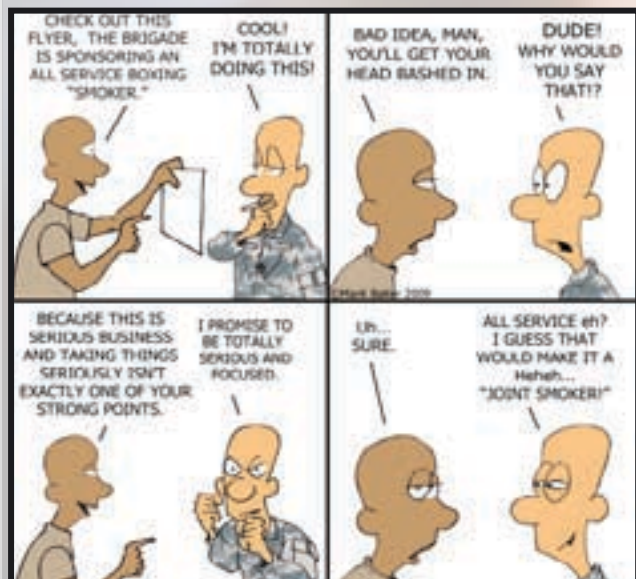
However, a few of the fight scenes were a little dark.

It's not an Oscar contender in any category, but you don't go see a ninja movie for the story and acting, right?

If you walk out of the a ninja movie wanting to Kung Fu fight your friends, a trash can and a random ninja, then the movie was a success.

"Ninja Assassin" succeeded.

PVT MURPHY



Sustainer Reel Time Theater

Wednesday, Feb. 17

5 p.m. Precious
8 p.m. Dear John

Thursday, Feb. 18

5 p.m. Dear John
8 p.m. Did you hear about the Morgans

Friday, Feb. 19

2 p.m. Leap Year
5 p.m. Alvin and the Chipmunks
8:30 p.m. Valentine's Day

Saturday, Feb. 20

2 p.m. Youth in Revolt
5 p.m. Valentine's Day
8 p.m. Alvin and the Chipmunks

Sunday, Feb. 21

2 p.m. Valentine's Day
5 p.m. Leap Year
8 p.m. Youth in Revolt

Monday, Feb. 22

5 p.m. Youth in Revolt
8 p.m. Valentine's Day

Tuesday, Feb. 23

5 p.m. Valentine's Day
8 p.m. Leap Year

Wednesday, Feb. 24

5 p.m. Leap Year
8 p.m. Valentine's Day



PHOTOS AROUND IRAQ



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Ali Haghighi

An interpreter explains the workings of an M-120 grenade launcher during weapons familiarization training Feb. 3, at Contingency Operating Location Marez, near Mosul, Iraq.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Anderson Savoy

(Above) Spc. Johnny Palmer from 2nd Infantry Division and a 29 Palms, Calif., native, assists Iraqi Soldiers as they disassemble an M16 assault rifle at an armor class held by 2nd Infantry Division Soldiers Jan. 18 at Contingency Operating Site Warhorse, Iraq



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Matthew D. Leistikow

A Soldier with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, shares a coffee break with a member of Iraq's Emergency Services Unit Feb. 2 at a Traffic Control Point near Kirkuk, Iraq. Soldiers from 1-30 Inf. Regt. maintain security within the TCP while Iraqi personnel conduct day-to-day operations.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jillian Munyon

(Above) Sgt. Sandra Ospina, with 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, demonstrates the proper way to search personnel entering security checkpoints Feb. 3 at Contingency Operating Location Marez, near Mosul, Iraq. Ospina is training the Iraqi Federal Police in maintaining the security of their country.

An Iraqi Soldier with the 49th Iraqi Army, hands out backpacks to children Jan. 26 at their school in Derka, Iraq.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Matthew D. Leistikow

NEWS AROUND IRAQ

Iraqi women join Army ranks

BAGHDAD – A group of 65 Iraqi women from across the country started Army basic combat training in Baghdad Jan. 27 to learn fundamental military skills including basic weapons handling and marching.

These women are the third group of trainees ever to participate in the 45-day course, which begins with administrative processing, issuing of uniforms and other essential equipment, just as their male counterparts would experience.

Although some in the group had security concerns about revealing their identity, others were so proud of their service in the Iraqi Army, they wanted to tell their stories.

"I lost my husband and my son in an explosion," said one female Soldier. "I have no one to take care of me and this gives me a job."

It is still not easy to find a job in the Iraqi Army, but the opportunity is there for those who are persistent.

"There is a long list of people who want to get jobs in the Army," said one of the youngest Soldiers.

During his welcome speech to the new class, Staff Maj. Gen. Samir Al Basha, who heads the Iraqi Army Tactical Training Directorate, said he hopes every student will complete the challenging training.

"If any of you need anything at all, I am here to help," he said.

Lt. Col. Raad Hashim Mohammed, officer in charge of training, said, "Most of these Soldiers have been through one of the previous rotations of training and returned to receive an update to army procedures and weapons training."

Although many currently hold administrative and personnel positions in the army these women will also help provide security in the upcoming elections.

"They will be responsible for searching females at check points as well," said Samir.

Otis Brown II, senior adviser with Iraqi Training and Advisory Mission – Army, said "The goal down the road is total integration of the female Soldier in the Iraqi Army. We are encouraged by the tremendous progress that we've seen thus far and we look forward to seeing the next steps the Iraqi Army will take."

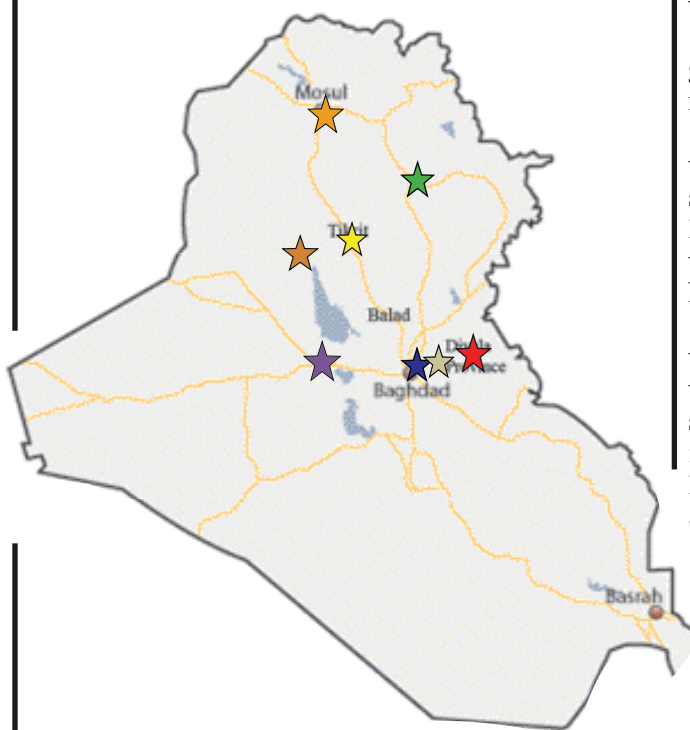
Since the first course was conducted in June, 125 women have completed the training.

Iraqi Army learns to enable new leaders

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION WARRIOR, Iraq – Senior advisers with Kirkuk Training Center (K1), Iraq, are in the process of getting the 12th and 4th divisions of the Iraqi Army to view their noncommissioned officers as he backbone of their Army.

To do this, the advisers at K1 have expanded their focus from the training of IA Soldiers to training and enabling Iraqi noncommissioned officers to be leaders.

NCOs are already in the lead, training their Soldiers in combat lifesaving, basic combat training, mortar platoon training and more, under the observation of



U.S. forces. However, they are not being used to their full potential as NCOs, said Master Sgt. Eric Fies, military transition team, senior enlisted adviser at K1.

To fully enable junior Iraqi NCOs, senior NCOs and officers at K1 are holding platoon sergeant courses and allowing junior NCOs to lead various classes.

This curriculum closely resembles the Warrior Leader Course the U.S. Army offers their NCOs in conducting physical training, refreshing basic Soldier skills and building their confidence as a leaders.

To add to that confidence, senior NCOs are having the junior NCOs teach each other and their Soldiers.

By building their confidence as leaders, they will reach their full potential and be able to train and manage their Soldiers more efficiently, said Fies.

"It is a long road, completely empowering the Iraqi NCOs, but so far we have a good start to getting to the end of it," he said.

Dragon brigade turns over two bases in Salah ad Din province

SALAH AD DIN PROVINCE, Iraq – Two bases were handed back to the Government of Iraq Feb. 1 in accordance with the U.S. - Iraq Security Agreement.

The historic Mahmoon Palace and the Sharqat Joint Coordination Center were both transitioned back to the GoI from the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. Sameer al-Haddad, the Iraqi receivership secretariat, signed for both centers.

The Mahmoon Palace was built as a place to celebrate Saddam Hussein's birthdays, and it still contains Hussein-era chandeliers, columns, and decorative tiled floors and ceilings.

Previously, the palace served as the Tikrit Joint Coordination Center where the Iraqi Security Forces, government officials and U.S. Soldiers coordinated emergency response functions for Tikrit.

With the transition of the Mahmoon Palace, Lt. Col. Robert Cain, commander of 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field

Artillery Regiment promised to continue partnerships with the ISF and GoI.

"We continue to support the resolution by the Iraqi government to reduce the number of troops and the number of bases that we occupy in Iraq," Cain said.

"Even though we're reducing the number of bases throughout the country of Iraq, we are continuing to support the Iraqi government and the Iraqi Security Forces throughout the entire province and we'll continue to support them up until the last day that we're here in Iraq."

For service members who previously deployed with the unit to Baghdad during the surge of troops into the country, working with ISF and seeing the transition of the palace was a sign of progress, said Sgt. 1st Class George Havel, an artilleryman with 2/32nd Regt., who spent four months working with ISF at the JCC.

"When we came in during the surge everything was geared toward patrolling and pretty much IED negation," said Havel. "Now it's more of a professional climate, dealing hand in hand with the Iraqis themselves ... it's a night and day difference. It's very symbolic. This place is a piece of their history and they understand it. It's very well kept up for what it's gone through."

Iraqi Army opens operations, intelligence center

DIYALA, Iraq – For some, gone are the days of beginning work at 4 a.m. or working during extreme weather conditions. After months of sweat and hard work, a team of 62 individuals can rest. The Combined Operations and Intelligence Center is complete.

The grand opening of the COIC took place Jan. 10 at Forward Operating Base Kameesh, Iraq. A team composed of 10 Soldiers from the 5th Iraqi Army Field Engineer Regiment, 50 Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 37th Engineer Battalion, Vertical Construction Platoon, and two Iraqi interpreters, were responsible for the construction of the COIC.

"The Soldiers worked together and conducted cross-training on carpentry and masonry skills during construction of a 30-by-70 foot concrete masonry block building," said Sgt. 1st Class Brian A. Money, the platoon sergeant and a Denver native.

The engineers worked quickly to build the COIC from the ground up, as U.S. Soldiers demonstrated to the Iraqis how to reinforce the masonry blocks. The engineers worked to preserve structural integrity. Two battalion inspectors from the 37th Engineer Battalion periodically inspected the quality of the building.

A truss jig was created to use as a template for the 35 trusses required for the roof. A truss is the backbone of the roof system. The team built 35 trusses in two days. It took a day to install the corrugated steel, thus completing the roof system. Without the truss jig, the COIC would have taken an extra week to complete.

During the construction of the COIC, a bond was forged between the engineers and Iraqis as they worked side by side each day. The U.S. and

Iraqi Soldiers had lunch and chai tea together every day.

"The biggest impact the partnership had on all the paratroopers was the ability to convey to the Iraqi Soldiers the American standard for concrete construction," said Money.

Now that the COIC is complete, it can be used for its intended purpose, said Maj. David Szymanski, the 5th Iraqi Army Division COIC team chief with the military intelligence team.

"The main objective of the COIC is to assist the Iraqi Army in establishing enduring systems that will enable them to command and control and maintain situational awareness in their areas of operation," said Szymanski.

Iraqis coordinate contract to allow well construction at Speicher

 CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – Progress toward an economically viable Iraq was once again made when the Iraqi Based Industrial Zone signed a contract with an Iraqi company Jan. 18 to build a well on land leased by Contingency Operating Base Speicher.

"The Al-Wissam company wanted to build a well to expand their business and growth of their company," said Capt. Calvin Fisher, the officer in charge of I-BIZ and a Durham, N.C., native. "We facilitated an agreement with the landowners, the Task Force Marne office of the staff judge advocate and the business."

I-BIZ works with Iraqi businesses to allow economic opportunities on the base and in the local communities.

The well will be on a piece of land close to COB Speicher, where eggplants and green beans grow.

The Al-Wissam group has other facilities around the province. The company approaches farmers in the area to show them new technologies and irrigation techniques to grow crops more efficiently. They also plan to rejuvenate natural areas on the COB by planting plants and trees, and they have been working with I-BIZ to make that goal a reality. Iraqi farmers will be hired by the company to grow more crops as well.

The Al-Wissam group will also contribute to science with their crops. The land will be used to grow Jojoba plants. The plants will be used by Tikrit University to study oils from the plant that people apply to their skin for cleansing purposes. The study will examine facets of the plant, including how much sunlight it needs, how much water it will require and other important information on how to grow the plant.

Capt. Todd Chard and Lt. Col. Perry Wadsworth, both with the Task Force Marne office of the staff judge advocate, oversaw the contract to make sure it adhered to the rules pertaining to the base.

Wadsworth said he believes the agreement will be beneficial for everyone involved.

"This contract is a good way of showing how Iraqis can help themselves," he said. "It will build their own capacity for agriculture. They can do it rather than have outside experts do it or purchase material from other places in the country."

No specific date has been set for construction of the well.

I-BIZ brings in companies to participate in projects for the economic viability of the base, to include recycling and construction projects.

The contract is part of a larger effort to help COB Speicher and the surrounding areas become self-sufficient in preparation for the drawdown of U.S. troops from Iraq.

Iraqi Army mortar men participate in first live-fire exercise

 CAMP RAMADI, Iraq – Iraqi troops demonstrated their mortar skills to U.S. counterparts during a live-fire exercise Jan. 27 in eastern Al Anbar province.

The mortar men, from 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division, fired live mortar rounds during the training exercise with paratroopers from 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division (Advise and Assist); a hands on event that the Iraqi mortar men said they found to be a critical part of the multi-day training event with the Americans aimed at moving them closer to self sufficiency.

"This training is very useful," said Sgt. Safaa Hussein Ali, an IA mortar man. "It is the first time we have shot live rounds."

The mortar training was one of several competencies ordered by the Iraqi Ministry of Defence, said staff Brig. Gen. Adel Abbas, commander of the Iraqi brigade. American paratroopers have been training the Iraqi mortar men since August 2009.

"Our forces are experiencing change since working with American forces, and the training our Soldiers are getting from American Soldiers is very good," said Adel.

The training included putting the mortar tube into action, correctly aligning the sights and aiming the mortar, as well as using the proper commands associated with mortar use.

"The partnered live-fire exercise was a great opportunity for our IA counterparts to not only see and participate in a live fire but also to plan one," said 1st Lt. Charles F. Sexton, a 2-504 PIR platoon leader.

Sexton said they ironed out some issues to ensure the training even got off the ground.

"A major challenge leading up to the live-fire exercise was the location," Sexton said. "Luckily, we were able to rely on the IA to find us a location far from any inhabited areas."

The advise-and-assist brigade plans to continue training with the Iraqi Army for the duration of the deployment.

US military police teach Iraqis to properly handle evidence

 CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION MAREZ, Iraq – Five members of the Iraqi Security Forces were recognized Jan. 30 by United States officials during a ceremony at Contingency Operating Location Marez, in Mosul, Iraq.

Three Federal Police officers and two Iraqi Army Soldiers were responsible for identifying and preventing vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices throughout the Ninewa province.

In addition to discovering the original VBIED Dec. 15, the police officers safely evacuated civilians, military personnel and local emergency workers after they discovered a second VBIED.

Jan. 20, two more VBIEDS were discovered by Iraqi Army Soldiers in separate incidents, one of whom discovered multiple IEDs within the area, which were later disarmed.

Jan. 21, upon the discovery of a VBIED, an Iraqi Soldier identified, pursued and eliminated the person responsible for triggering the VBIED. Despite being wounded

during the chase, the Soldier killed the insurgent before he harmed other Soldiers or Ninewa Province residents.

The Iraqi Soldiers and Iraqi Police Officers were presented the Army Commendation Medal by Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, commanding general of U.S. Division – North during the ceremony.

Engineers complete school project in Sadr City

 SADR CITY, Iraq – More than 500 elementary school students in Mahalla neighborhood in Sadr City were given the gift of a better educational environment following the completion of the 12-room Al Adalaa Elementary School.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region District, Loyalty Resident Office served as the managing construction partner for the 11-month, \$816,000 project. The school was funded through the Iraq Transition Assistance Office Economic Support Fund.

The school project included the construction of a two-story classroom building, an administration building and a playground. The administration building contains office spaces, a first aid room and a food service area. The site also included the construction of a three-meter high security wall surrounding the school, a guard house with a steel entry gate and a maintenance building.

Inez Bergerson, the Loyalty Office project engineer, said the Sadr City school project posed some unique challenges for project engineers.

"Because this school is located in Sadr City, where violence can be expected at any time, our office managed the construction by relying heavily on our local national engineers for updates and quality assurance," Bergerson said.

"Of all the projects I have had the pleasure of working on while in Iraq, schools remain my favourite. A new school can provide the opportunity for hundreds of children who have so little to receive a quality education, to become productive citizens and share in the growth of this emerging country."

The Iraqi-owned Al Sald Company was the general contractor for the school construction project.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq has completed thousands of reconstruction projects in partnership with the U.S. Government and the Government of Iraq. Since 2004, USACE has completed 5,257 projects throughout Iraq valued at more than \$9.1 billion, and has more than 350 projects ongoing. The overall reconstruction effort in Iraq provides jobs for more than 20,000 Iraqis.

Iraqi Security Forces prevent bomb attack

 TIKRIT, Iraq – Iraqi Security Forces, with U.S. forces advisers, intercepted bomb-making materials Jan. 29 in Diyala province.

Intelligence reports indicate al-Qaeda in Iraq planned to use the cache to build a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device.

ISF conducted the operation after receiving intelligence reports indicating the materials were staged on the outskirts of a large town in the province.

The Iraqi forces air assaulted into the area and quickly secured the material.

Six 80 lb. bags of a fertilizer-based high explosives, two five-gallon cans of homemade explosives, and one RKG-3 grenade were seized by ISF during the operation.

Phantom Support



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matthew C. Cooley

The Houston Texan cheerleaders perform for service members and civilians Feb. 4 at the Morale Welfare and Recreation center at Contingency Operating Location Q-West. The women visited Soldiers from the 15th Special Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) at work before doing a few cheers, posing for photos with service members and civilians, and signing autographs.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Cory Grogan

Soldiers with A Company, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment conducts combat drills prior to going on a mission outside Forward Operating Base Scania, Iraq.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Mario Fernandez

Staff Sgt. Frederick McNeil, a Liberty, Miss., native, grades Staff Sgt. Larry Walker, a Palm Harbor, Fla., native, during the push-up event of the Army physical fitness test. This is the first test given while in theater for the 296th Transportation Company, 260th Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

Spc. Johan Gustafson, a welder with 169th Seaport Operations Company, 260th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade and a Medillene, Columbia, native, fabricates a roller sleeve system for the forks on the 10K forklift that is used to load helicopters efficiently and safely at the Arrival/Departure Air Control Group, Baghdad International Airport in Baghdad.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Zackery A. Gurley

(Right) B Company, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team prepares to leave on an early morning convoy Jan. 7, from Al Asad, Iraq.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Anita VanderMolen