

Victory Times



Telling the United States Forces - Iraq story

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A burning question: USF-I turns to incinerators

Story by Sgt. Chris McCann
United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs

In many American cities, curbside recycling programs make trash reduction simple. But in Iraq, service members and civilians often don't consider the amount of refuse that's produced or what happens to it when the garbage truck rumbles away.

But just like in the United States, it's a very real concern. Here in Iraq, the best answer is to reduce the amount of trash through recycling and dispose of what remains in an incinerator, which burns the trash and then burns the fumes, resulting in less smell and less smoke in the air.

Currently there are 27 solid waste incinerators operating in Iraq.

"We have a responsibility to take care of the area we're living in," said Maj. Michael McMullen, a native of Alexandria, Va., who serves as the solid waste program manager for United States Forces - Iraq.

In addition to the solid waste incinerators, 23 medical waste incinerators are also now in use.

Medical waste is destroyed in different incinerators than the usual trash, McMullen pointed out.

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Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Roger Dey

Soldiers of the 705th Military Police Battalion stand at attention during the ceremony transferring authority for the Camp Cropper Theater Internment Facility from the 89th MP Brigade to the 49th MP Bde. Tactical Command Post April 24. The 705th will support the 49th MP Bde. TAC CP and will be responsible for the operation of the Camp Cropper TIF.

49th assumes command of detention facility

Story by Spc. Eddie Siguenza
49th Military Police Brigade

The 49th Military Police Brigade Tactical Command Post officially replaced the 89th Military Police Brigade during a Transfer of Authority at Camp Cropper, April 24, and assumed responsibility of the last detention center in Iraq operated by United States forces.

The 49th MP Bde. TAC CP, established April 1, is part of the California Army National Guard's 49th

MP Bde., which has been in Iraq since October, 2009.

The TAC CP's mission will focus on Camp Cropper's Theatre Internment Facility. The TAC CP's priority is to prepare to transfer the TIF to the Iraqi government by July.

Colonel Grace Edinboro, commander of the 49th MP Bde. TAC CP, took over for Col. John Huey, commander of the 89th MP Bde., an active duty Army unit

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Understanding how God made us real

By Chaplain (Col.) Leonard Higgins
Garrison Command Chaplain, 561st TF Twister

One of my favorite children's stories is the "Velveteen Rabbit" or "How Toys Become Real" by Margery Williams.

A stuffed toy rabbit (with real thread whiskers) comes to life in this tale of the transformative power of love.

Given as a Christmas gift to a young boy, the Velveteen Rabbit lives in the nursery with all of the other toys, waiting for the day when the Boy (as he is called) will choose him as a playmate. In time, the shy Rabbit befriends the tattered Skin Horse, the wisest resident of the nursery, who reveals the goal of all nursery toys: to be made "real" through the love of a human.

The Skin Horse had lived longer in the nursery than any of the others. He was so old that his brown coat was bald in patches and showed the seams underneath, and most of the hairs in his tail had been pulled out to string bead necklaces. He was wise, for he had seen a long succession of mechanical toys arrive to boast and swagger, and by-and-by break their mainsprings and pass away, and he knew that they were only toys, and would never turn into anything else. For nursery magic is very strange and wonderful, and only those playthings that are old and wise and experienced like the Skin Horse understand all about it.

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful.

"When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

"I suppose you are real?" said the Rabbit. And then he wished he had not said it, for he thought the Skin Horse might be sensitive. But the Skin Horse only smiled.

"The Boy's Uncle made me Real," he said. "That was a great many years ago; but once you are Real you can't become unreal again. It lasts for always."

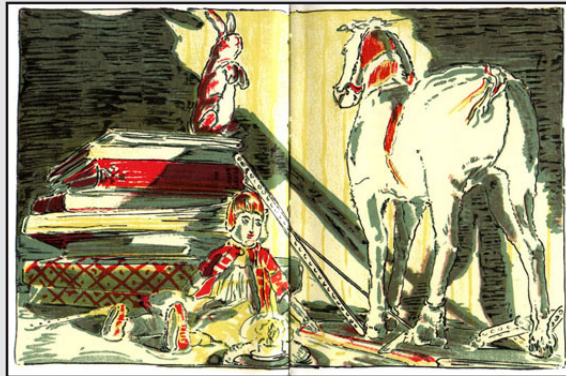
Ever find yourself grieving, hurting, belly laughing or even getting a little angry?

Guess what, it is God's way of helping you to understand how REAL you have become.

So, if you're looking a little ragged these days, your hair is falling out, your eyes drooping and your shine not so bright – you guessed it, YOU'RE REAL!

The Apostle Paul of the Christian New Testament summed up my thoughts in this way, *"I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances. I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I've found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty. Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am."* (Philippians 4:11, The Message)

Indeed, God is the one who has made you real through his transformative loving power. Make the most of your reality no matter where you land.



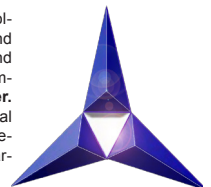
Courtesy Chaplains Office



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Beware of common electrical hazards

Story and graphics by Sgt. Dan Yarnall
United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs

In the past year, electrical fires on U.S. military bases in Iraq have caused injuries, taken lives, and caused more than \$2 million in damages, said United States Forces-Iraq Safety Manager Lon Cooper.

While there are many factors that have been the cause for fires, two main culprits have been electrical outlets and fluorescent lights, said Navy Capt. Russ Hughes, chief of USF-I Task Force Safe.

At this point in Operation Iraqi Freedom, it's hard to imagine life without certain comforts afforded to us through the availability of electricity in our rooms.

Every housing unit has florescent lights, air conditioning, and outlets, which power everything from personal computers and television sets to refrigerators.

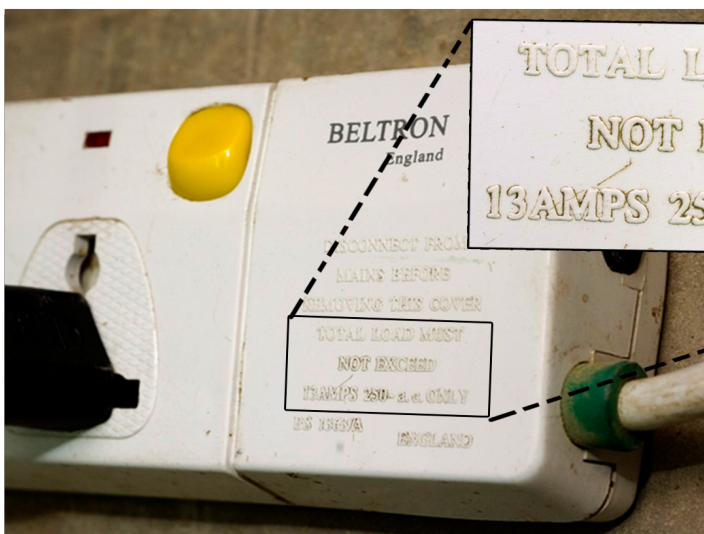
For service members, having these comforts in Iraq comes with responsibility, and potentially deadly consequences if not used properly.

Soldiers need to be aware of common electrical hazards and leadership needs to ensure troops are using safe practices, said Cooper.

"Knowing and implementing the safety standard is the key to success," Cooper said.

Cooper explained that only certified power strips and converters should be used in private quarters. Soldiers can get them through the mayor's cell at no charge. No matter where they come from, they need to have the proper certification labels.

Ensuring electrical equipment is certified is just the first



Overloaded power strips can draw too much power and overheat resulting in fires.

All certified devices will have a label embedded in the device. The primary European certification label is CE.



The most common label is the UL Mark.



step. Too often people overload power strips by plugging in items requiring more power than the strips are meant to handle, Hughes said.

"Most power strips are rated for about fifteen amps, but if you plug your refrigerator, your TV and a couple other things into a power strip, you could be drawing more than thirty amps," Hughes said.

Power strips will overheat if too much power is drawn from them. He said the safest thing to do is plug higher powered items such as a refrigerator or television directly into a socket or converter.

In addition to power strips, Hughes pointed out that fluorescent lights are also one of the main causes of electrical fires.

When a florescent light goes bad, it flickers and generates an unsafe amount of heat.

Another cause for concern is when people tamper with the overhead lights. When people feel they have too much light, they often unscrew a bulb but don't remove it so that only one light comes on, said Hughes. Even though it may not light up, it is still "live" with electricity and dangerous.

This can cause fixture to overheat, which can result in setting fire to the ceiling. It is safer to remove the bulb or simply use a lamp.

Cooper stressed that no matter the situation, if safety is in question, people should contact the mayor's cell and an expert will come out to fix the problem.

For more information, contact Task Force Safe at 318-485-7143, or the USF-I safety office at 318-485-4624.

'Phantom Warrior' spends Mother's Day in Iraq

Story and photo by Sgt. Rebekah Lampman
United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs

In 2003, Staff Sgt. Herinah Asaah celebrated Mother's Day in Iraq for the first time by calling her mom who lived in west Africa. This year, she's back in Iraq again and celebrating another first for the holiday.

"My first deployment I didn't have any children," said Asaah, the United States Forces – Iraq chaplain's operations noncommissioned officer-in-charge assigned to III Corps from Fort Hood, Texas. "I went home, had two beautiful girls and was lucky enough to not be in any units that deployed. But here I am now."

Asaah's daughters are six and three and are living with their father in Austin, Texas. She says it can be challenging at times being away from her family, but she gets advice and wisdom from parents in the units who have been on multiple deployments.

"My children are what keep me resilient during this stressful situation and they are my biggest motivation."

"We learn from each other," Asaah said. "We talk about different experiences we're going through and I've been able to pick up a tip here and there to use with my own kids."

She says its different being over here this time as a mother, especially because she won't be able to call her mom this Mother's Day.

"My mom passed away in 2005," said Assah. "It's one of those things where there's that hole you'll never fill and you just have to remember and appreciate who they were and what they did for you, especially at this time of the year."

Being a mother now, she says Mother's Day has taken on a whole new meaning to her.

"We've been encouraging Soldier's to send cards back to their mothers," she said. "And any cards we have left over at the chapel I'm going to be giving out to the mothers here on base to say thank you from one

mom to another.

For now, there's nothing special planned for Mother's Day for Asaah, at least nothing she knows about.

"I think they might draw me pictures since they love to draw," said Asaah.

"But I don't want to think too much and spoil the surprise, no matter what it is I know I'll love it," she added.

As she sat looking at the pictures on her desk, there is one thing she knows for sure when it comes to being a mother deployed.

"My children are what keep me resilient during this stressful situation and they are my biggest motivation," she said.

Mother's Day will be celebrated on 9 May this year.



Staff Sgt. Herinah Asaah, the Chaplain's Operations Noncommissioned Officer-in-charge for United States Forces - Iraq, raises an American flag over Al Faw Palace at Camp Victory. Asaah, assigned to III Corps out of Fort Hood, Texas, is flying the flag for her two daughters, ages six and three, for Mother's Day.

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based out of Fort Hood, Texas. During their deployment the 89th closed the Bucca TIF in September 2009 and transferred Taji Theater Internment Facility Reconciliation Center to Iraq's Ministry of Justice in March.

These efforts led to Camp Cropper's current status as the "next milestone in U.S. and Iraq relations in building Iraq's correctional system," Huey said.

"To the 49th MP Brigade TAC, I want to thank you for stepping up and jumping into the breach, and getting on board this train travelling at 100 miles per hour," said Maj. Gen. Nelson Cannon, the U.S. Forces-Iraq deputy commanding general for detainee operations and provost marshal general. "Transitions are challenging. And in this business, it brings great risk. But you've all proven yourself up to the task."

"This is a strategic mission for the United States of America. It's important for the Army, it's important

for the Armed Forces. It's important for the nation," Edinboro said. "We need to make sure that people under our care and custody are treated with dignity and respect and have all of the rights that are given to them, but are also controlled in a way that gives a positive influence on Iraq and US forces."

The Cropper TIF is a multimillion dollar facility run by the U.S. Army and Iraqi forces. It currently houses more than 2,500 detainees.

The TAC CP will be assisted by Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 705th MP Battalion. The 705th operates the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., the only maximum security prison in the Department of Defense.

The 49th MP Bde., which still presides over its original 4,800-troop, four-battalion command, took charge of an additional 3,000 Soldiers and three battalions through the transfer of authority ceremony between the



Col. Grace Edinboro,
commander,
49th MP Bde. TAC CP

89th and the TAC CP.

Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon

Marathon, half marathon events honor victims

► Runners participating in the 10th Annual Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial Marathon take off at the beginning of the shadow run on Camp Victory April 25. Sixty service members and civilians participated in the full marathon and 240 participated in the half marathon that honored the victims of the Oklahoma City Bombing in 1995.

▼ A Soldier reads the names of the victims of the Oklahoma City Bombing prior to the beginning of a shadow run on Camp Victory and Liberty held in conjunction with the 10th Annual Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial Marathon.



Burning, from Page 1

“It’s for the safety of the employees; we keep it separate throughout the process so there’s no contact with blood-borne pathogens.”

Hazardous materials such as contaminated soil, grease, paint, oily rags, and other such items are taken care of in a separate process so that they are not releasing contaminants into the air. Batteries are recycled by the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office.

Twelve more solid-waste incinerators are scheduled to be installed this year, and plans call for burn pit use to be phased out by December, McMullen said.

Burn pits were used in Iraq when U.S. forces began operations in 2003; given the fluid security situation, there was often no better option. However, as combat operations morphed into advising and assisting the Iraqi forces, incinerators and recycling operations have become more feasible.

In Taji, the base that was at the forefront of the discussion on the health impact of burn pits in media reports, the installation of incinerators is now complete. A second incinerator was finished in January and a third one was just brought online April 27.

In 2008, the Air Force Institute of Operational Health and U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (now Public Health Command) both concluded that other than minor respiratory irritation, no other types of illness were a result of exposure to emissions from burn pits.

“Our number one priority is the health of service members, and if any service member or veteran is ill, they should seek medical attention,” said Craig Postlewaite, acting director, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Health Protection and Readiness Programs.

Health issues aside, McMullen said incinerators improve the quality of life.

“We’re here as guests, and we should leave things clean,” he said. “People like incinerators better anyway; they don’t have to smell things burning – burn pits smell unpleasant when the wind is blowing in your direction.”



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Roger Dey

Recycling bins are located throughout living areas around Victory Base Complex



Courtesy photo

There are eight solid waste incinerators and one medical incinerator on Victory Base Complex.

While the incinerators burn most of the waste generated, service members and civilians alike can also help reduce the stream of trash before it even gets to a dumpster by increasing their recycling efforts; from the plastic water bottles used all over Iraq to aluminum cans and wooden pallets, much of the trash can be recycled and reused for other products.

Water bottles are not re-used, said McMullen; they are taken to a sorting facility on Victory Base Complex where they are crushed into bales and sold to make any number of items. Cardboard and aluminum are likewise condensed and sold to facilities in the area.

“Recycling is good for the Iraqi economy, and it cuts down on waste in landfills and dumps,” McMullen said.

Dining facilities across Iraq have recycling bins for drink cans, plastic bottles, and other items. Living areas are now equipped with recycling bins for plastic, and most have bins for wood, scrap metal, and cardboard.

When disposing of an item, it’s always a good idea to take just a moment to consider whether it could be recycled, and put it into the appropriate receptacle.

Another critical point is that while sorting aluminum from plastic is basic, so is separating military items from general trash. Uniforms, ammunition, equipment, and weapons should be placed in amnesty boxes located in various places around Victory Base Complex, said McMullen. Ammunition, grenades, and explosives can damage incinerators or cause serious injury to workers, and uniforms in the wrong hands can pose a very real threat as well.

“The trash initiatives are very important,” said Maj. Tom McAvoy, a liaison officer with the Deputy Commanding General of Operations Assistance and Training. “We’re training the Iraqi military not only on military subjects, but also about how to care for their country. This will be a lasting legacy.”

A few seconds to place recyclables in the right bins can make a huge difference for Iraq and the United States Forces’ mission

SAFETY ZONE



Essential Electrical Safety Checks

- Avoid overloading circuits or outlets and do not daisy chain power strips.
- Only use certified power strips and adapters embossed with UL or CE logo.
- Leave technical work to the experts by reporting any potential electrical issues.
- Plug high powered items directly into an outlet or a transformer.
- Identify where fire extinguishers are located in living and work locations.
- No cooking or open flames in living quarters or at work.
- Unplug any non-essential items when not in use.
- Keep at least 6 inch clearance around wall outlets.
- Report immediately any incidence of electrical shock.

SARC Smarts



What is a UVA? The Unit Victim Advocate (UVA) provides essential support and care to the victim, such as providing information on available options and resources to assist the victim in making informed decisions as they progress through their resolution and healing. The UVA maintains communications and contact with a victim as needed for continued victim support throughout their process.

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

VBC Facility Operating Hours

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

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

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

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

Paul Smith Gym
Open 24 Hours

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

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

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

Golby TMC Sick Call
Monday - Friday 7:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Saturday & Sunday 9 - 11:30 a.m.

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

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

Notice

Check it out:
USF-I Web pages
www.usf-iraq.com
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www.twitter.com/USF_Iraq

Facebook -
United States Forces-Iraq
U.S. Army III Corps
Phantom Battalion
III Corps Fort Hood

Resiliency is key to Soldier, mission success

Story and photo by Spc. Britney Bodner
United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs

Editors Note: This is the first installment of a three part series on Soldier resiliency.

Soldiers who have deployed are confronted with adversity in many forms that range from dealing with a new environment to facing combat situations.

Even though the mission has shifted from combat operations to advising and assisting, it's still critical for Soldiers to maintain their resiliency.

To help sustain the ability to withstand adversity the Army has created the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program with the mission to develop and institute a holistic fitness program for Soldiers, families, and Army civilians in order to enhance performance and build resilience.

"I think that's the genius of the Army, naming a program 'Comprehensive Soldier Fitness' that addresses the mental, physical and spiritual aspects. Combined, these aspects produce a resilient Soldier capable of doing their duty," said United States Forces-Iraq Deputy Chaplain, Col. Michael Lembke.

"It's a person's physical, spiritual, and mental roots that determine their ability to withstand adversity," he said. "It is an individual thing, but it's those individuals together who make up the force, and when they're eroded in any regard, it degrades our overall ability to be able to deal with war."

The key to physical resiliency, said Lembke, is becoming stronger through teaching, training, and counseling. Physical resiliency is defined as performing and excelling in activities that require aerobic fitness, endurance, strength, healthy body composition and flexibility derived through exercise, nutrition and training.

"Physical resiliency helps you stay alert and motivated, which helps you cope with stress better," said Sgt. 1st Class Jose Evans, a former drill sergeant who is now deployed with the 14th MI Bn. "It makes you think of challenges as opportunities to make yourself better."

Currently on his fifth deployment, Staff Sgt. Aaron Shrock, a liaison officer for United States Division-South with the 14th Military Intelligence Battalion, knows the importance of having physical resiliency and the effect it has on stress.

"My first deployment, we didn't have time to go to the gym, much less have one to work out in," Shrock said. "This was back at the beginning when the gyms weren't built yet."

"We worked 12 hour shifts so there wasn't a lot of time to work out. When we did, it was with bricks and blocks, makeshift weights with poles," he said.

Shrock said to go a whole year without exercising, while dealing with deployment stresses at the same time, was miserable.

"It really did make it hard going home. Not only did I go home stressed, I was going home with a fat body that wasn't physically fit," Shrock said. "To be able to work out gives you something to work for. You don't feel down because you have something that is bringing you up."

Having a goal to shoot for to improve your physical fitness not only improves resiliency, it takes your mind off everyday stresses, Shrock said.

To assist Soldiers with this, the 14th MI Bn. has set physical goals for its Soldiers through the Steel Challenge.

The challenge begins with an Army physical fitness test in which a participant must score at least 270 points. They then are tested on the amount of chin-ups, pull-ups, dips, and bench and leg presses they can do.

The final event is a six-mile road march with a 35-pound ruck completed in 90 minutes or less.

The service members who participate spent a lot of time training for the event, said Shrock, who has participated in the event twice. This improves their physical fitness and increases resiliency in multiple ways.

Going through this challenge together builds esprit de corps among the competitors. They're all aiming for the same goal and motivate each other to become better and finish strong, said Shrock.

"That's the great thing about the military, we're always with our buddies," said Shrock. "The closer the group is, the better they work, train and recover."

Shrock said physical fitness is a part of his daily life and helps him stay resilient.

"I didn't want to do anything (after leave) until I started going back in the gym. It just picks you up, keeps you moving, keeps you motivated and ready for home," Shrock said.



Sgt. First Class Jose Evans, a former drill sergeant, now deployed with the 14th Military Intelligence Battalion, completes the required leg presses for the Steel Challenge on Camp Liberty, April 22. Staying physically fit and participating in events like the Steel Challenge, helps service members stay physically resilient.