



Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft

Master Sgt. Michael Howle, commandant of the new NCO Academy (right), discusses plans for the Academy with MND-C Command Sergeant Major Jesse L. Andrews Jr. (left) and Master Sgt. Stanley Hood, deputy commandant, Jan. 1 at FOB Kalsu.

TF Marne NCOs team up to build IA's 'backbone'

Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft
EDITOR

FOB KALSU — “No one is more professional than I,” states the U.S. Army’s NCO Creed, and noncommissioned officers at Forward Operating Base Kalsu are gearing up to instill the same pride and professionalism in their Iraq Army counterparts.

The Task Force Marne

NCO Academy at FOB Kalsu will welcome its first class of Iraqi soldiers Jan. 14.

“We’re going to be teaching them everything — combat orders, combat medical, map-reading, mounted patrols, dismounted patrols, weapons, rules of engagement, duties and responsibilities,” said Master Sgt. Michael Howle, the new

See **ACADEMY**, Page 3

Mobile PX coming to a FOB near you

Sgt. Luis Delgadillo
2ND BCT, 3RD INF. DIV.

FOB KALSU — If he was home greeting you when you entered the dealership he once worked at, the former salesman would greet you with, “Good morning, my name is Wally. Welcome to Stokes-Brown Toyota.”

Now, Staff Sgt. Wally Lawver’s call sign is “Candyman” and he operates a Post Exchange from the 40-foot shipping container he hauls with a truck and trailer.

In his visits to Combat Outpost Murray and Patrol Base Hawkes, the trained transportation specialist works for the benefit of many of the Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

For Lawver, a native of Beaufort, S.C., the mission began two months ago when he was at Forward Operating Base Kalsu searching for a more meaningful purpose. At the time,

See **PX**, Page 2


26 DEC

Rich,
Great visit. Many thanks. Soldiers were remarkable — clear-eyed and focused. Keep up the fire!
George Casey

A note from the Army Chief of Staff

Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey paid a visit to Task Force Marne Soldiers at Camp Victory to administer the oath of enlistment to 267 Soldiers at a mass re-enlistment ceremony Dec. 19 at Al Faw Palace.

PX: Kalsu NCO brings mobile PX to Soldiers

From Page 1

he had no Soldiers to take charge of, but opportunity came knocking.

He was given the chance to take care of Soldiers and be his own boss, an opportunity not granted to many, and in a blink of an eye he seized it.

"This is as easy as it gets when it comes to an NCO's job, taking care of Soldiers," Lawver said.

However, the job didn't start out that easy.

After being donated a leaky shipping container, Lawver set out to make it weatherproof and filled it with shelving. He had to construct it all on his own.

He said the hardest part of the entire build was getting the lofty 400-pound shelving units moved into the container, which he did using an ancient technique.

Through the use of round logs, he painstakingly rolled each of the eight shelving units up ramps and finally into the container.

Once all of the pieces were in place he was fronted money through the Army and Air Force Exchange Service to buy stock for the shelves.

Pfc. Michael Harrison, a tanker with Co. C, said he shops at the PX trailer, affectionately called, "Staff Sgt. Lawver's Outfitters," because Lawver has what they don't have at the patrol base.

The hours are long; when he's visiting a patrol base he stays open 24-hours-a-day to accommodate the grueling schedules of Soldiers in outlying areas.

The trailer also doubles as his living quarters but he says the conditions are ideal for him and the mission he has been placed in charge of is important



Sgt. Luis Delgadillo

Staff Sgt. Wally Lawver, (right) cashes out Pfc. Michael Harrison, a tanker with Co. C, at the Post Exchange trailer located at COP Murray Dec. 27.

enough to keep him highly motivated.

"He brings Falcon to us," said Harrison, of Paulsboro, N.J.

In his inventory, Lawver carries various types of snack foods, magazines, highly coveted tobacco products, medicines for the common cold, and the typical personal hygiene items.

"It's every American's God-given right to have fatty snack foods, and I'm the answer," he said.

He even carries some of the latest magazine titles; in his store there is an entire wall of sundry items and books donated by chaplains and other good Samaritans, which are available to anyone free of charge.

Lawver said if there are items he doesn't have when he arrives at Sol-

diers' patrol bases then they can special order anything and he does his best to ensure they are delivered in a timely manner.

In his first few weeks of being open, Lawver said he wasn't sure if he was going to be able to keep up with the volume of business he was receiving, but after a few weeks of being open, the customers tapered off. Things eventually settled down and now Lawver has been able to settle into a routine he's comfortable with.

Lawver says he's grateful for the opportunity he's been afforded. By bringing a little bit of big FOB life to the patrol base, he said he's showing the Soldiers on the front lines how much they are appreciated.

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7th Sustainment Brigade
720th Military Police Battalion
302nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

ACADEMY: New NCO Academy set to open for IA training at Kalsu

From Page 1

training facility's commandant. "The instructors who were selected are supposed to be some of the best NCOs we have here."

Preparations for the academy have been underway for approximately five weeks, during which time the NCOs have built the facility from the ground up.

"We started this from scratch, nada, zero," Howle said. "A month ago, we had eight empty tents. Now we have four sleep tents, three classrooms and an office tent. We've also set up a (squad training exercise) lane on a one-and-a-half-mile stretch of our perimeter road, and we're having a shoothouse built."

The classes will be small at first, with 20 Soldiers in each of the three platoons, Howle said. Subsequent classes will increase in size, with the largest number of attendees projected at 180. Six instructors will be assigned to each platoon.

"We're building this place up for the Iraqis to take it over," said Master Sgt. Kenneth Romine, the NCO Academy's chief of operations. "Out of every class, we'll take

three outstanding students to stay here and teach."

Training Iraqis to take over is a driving force for the NCOs running and teaching at the academy.

"Since this project kicked off, everyone's picked up a whole lot," said Staff Sgt. Mark Hooks, one of the program's instructors. "They all know that if we pull this off, we can hand it over and get out of here quicker."

He and the other instructors realize that this goal may not come to fruition right away, but they are remaining optimistic.

"It's going to take time to get their NCOs to the level we're at," said medical instructor Sgt. 1st Class James Phillips, who volunteered to teach at the NCO Academy for that very reason. "The sooner we can get them trained to teach their own people, the sooner we can get out of here."

During their last week of preparation before the first Iraqi soldiers arrive, the Academy has been conducting full dress rehearsals, covering everything from physical training to classroom material.

Multi-National Division – Center Command Sergeant



Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft

Instructors and interpreters participate in a full dress rehearsal Jan. 1 to prepare for teaching Iraqi soldiers attending the NCO Academy at FOB Kalsu.

Major Jesse L. Andrews Jr. paid a New Year's Day visit to the NCOs there to check on their progress.

"You're doing a great job; I couldn't be more pleased," Andrews enthused to Howle, Romine and deputy commandant Master Sgt. Stanley Hood. "I really appreciate the hard work and dedication you're putting in here."

The cadre of the Academy has been training hard to be able to effectively impart the knowledge and experience they've gained over their years as NCOs, and are looking forward to pointing their new students in the right di-

rection.

"This is a good step for the Iraqi Army," said instructor Sgt. 1st Class Gerald Newton. "Once they get their NCO Corps established, they'll be much better off."

Andrews shared a similar sentiment.

"Over the years, it has been acknowledged that the NCO Corps is the backbone of our Army," Andrews said. "Once the Iraqi NCOs get that, they'll get a better grip on their worth. They've got the combat experience — now they need the institutional knowledge. You've got to have both."

Safety Thought of the Day 90-Day Roll-up

Last 90 Days:

- Accident rate remained the same as compared to the previous quarter.
- Increase in severity of accidents with three fatalities in the last 90 days.

Next 90 Days:

- Vehicle accident mitigation
 - Review and enforce proper ground guide procedures.
 - Rehearse rollover, fire drills.

- Enforce speed limits and seatbelt usage.
- Ensure drivers are licensed, properly trained.
- Aviation accident mitigation
 - Ensure HLZ cards are updated.
 - Conduct FOD checks.
 - Ensure wire hazards maps are updated.
 - Fight complacency and remain vigilant in all tasks.
- Engaged leaders are critical to safe operations.

Join the MNC-I Chaplain Office for a Prayer Breakfast in honor of Dr. King's Legacy of Non-violence

7:30 a.m., Jan. 11
in the NFL Room,
Oasis DFAC

Special Guest Speaker:
Chap. (Maj.) Shon Neyland
"I Have A Dream"

Dr. King will be remembered through prayer, dance and song

Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast

"A Man of Faith"

If you have any questions, please call the MNC-I Chaplain Office at 822-5632

"...until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream"

Headline Highlights

Rollercoaster trouble; hostess blackmail charge

Rollercoaster makes unscheduled stop

BEIJING (Reuters) — A rollercoaster stalled at the top of a loop at China's biggest amusement park, leaving passengers stranded upside down, their legs pointed toward the sky.

Eighteen passengers were left hanging for half an hour several meters above the park on New Year's Eve Monday in the eastern province of Anhui, the China Daily said.

The passengers were riding the "Fireball" attraction at the Wuhu Fangte Amusement Park when the rollercoaster came to an abrupt halt.

"Park officials and local authorities rescued the stranded passengers after about 30 minutes and six were rushed to hospital and treated for dizziness," Xinhua news agency said.

Investigations revealed that strong headwind had triggered a mechanical fault, the agency said.

Hostess jailed for blackmail

HONG KONG (Reuters) — A Hong Kong karaoke hostess was jailed for three years Wednesday for blackmailing a senior government official by threatening to go public with a steamy videotape, a spokeswoman at the judiciary said.

Hui Wing, 36, had threatened to expose her relationship with the official, referred to as Mr. X to protect his identity during the trial, unless he paid her HK\$590,000 (\$75,000).

The Hong Kong official, who is married with children, had appeared in

court behind a screen as Hui spilled details of the liaison, including descriptions of sex in his office and how she had accompanied him on business visits to neighboring Macau and Guangdong.

District court judge Andrew Chan sentenced Hui to three years' jail on each of two counts of blackmail, with the sentences to run concurrently.

Chan said, however, he believed Hui and Mr. X had developed a loving relationship during their four-month affair, even calling each other husband and wife before it soured.

Hui met Mr. X in a Hong Kong karaoke club in late 2006.

Cuba Santeria priests keep mum on Castro

HAVANA (Reuters) — Priests offering New Year's prophecies from Cuba's Afro-Cuban religion on Wednesday gave few hints on the future of convalescing leader Fidel Castro and instead warned about dangerous climate change and epidemics.

Many Cubans eagerly await annual predictions from the Santeria religion, which is practised by 3 million people in Cuba and uses animal sacrifices to contact Yoruba deities originally worshiped by slaves brought from Africa.

Santeria priests, known as babalawos, steered clear of politics in this year's prophecies, instead warning about an environmental crisis, disease and crime.

They noted an improving economy and said they planned sacrifices to better the lives of the majority of Cubans.

"The challenge at this historic mo-

ment is not a political challenge ... It is not a social challenge, but the challenge of nature," Victor Betancourt, a Havana priest, said at a news conference.

Fidel Castro has not appeared in public since handing power to his brother Raul after undergoing emergency stomach surgery more than 17 months ago.

While there was no direct reference to Castro in the Santeria priests' cryptic forecasts, many Cubans traditionally scan over the "letter of the year" for interpretations of how the government might develop.

Raul Castro's call for a review of the island's problems has fuelled speculation about possible economic reforms to ease Cubans' struggle with high food costs and low wages.

Fidel Castro has only appeared in official photographs and pre-taped videos and it is not clear whether he will resume office. Most analysts say a smooth transition of power has already taken place.

His brother says Castro is recovering, consulted on key decisions and that Communist Party delegates back his nomination to run again for a National Assembly seat, a requirement for the presidency.

But in letters and statements, the older Castro has hinted he might not cling on to his posts but instead "contribute ideas" from his experience.

Santeria experts say the New Year predictions offer a glimpse into popular sentiment. This year's batch came after a meeting of more than 1,000 priests, including babalawos visiting from Venezuela, Peru and Italy.

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

from Sudoku: The Original Brain Workout From Japan

Solution to yesterday's puzzle:

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

ARABIC PHRASE OF THE DAY

Do not move

lett-it Hah-rek