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March 30, 2009

## 8th IA Div. mortar teams hone mission capability

SGT. RODNEY FOLIENTE  
2ND BCT, 4TH INF. DIV.



CAMP ECHO, Iraq – Soldiers from the 8th Iraqi Army Division completed a six-week mortar training course conducted by Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment March 24 at the 8th IA Div. headquarters.

The course ended with a competition between IA mortar teams, allowing them to apply their cumulative knowledge during the event.

"The overall training gives them a more immediate capability to hit targets with indirect fire and provide suppression and neutralization," said Sgt. 1st Class Joel Kane, mortar platoon sergeant with HHC. Kane said the mortar teams add a great deal of fire support capabilities to the IA units, leading to an increase in the division's strength and ability.

"We applied some of our techniques and tried to add to their abilities to employ their mortar systems. We've given them advanced map reading courses and gun training drills so they can take their crews and form mortar companies," said the Lenexa, Kansas native, who is on his second deployment to Iraq.

"Things have gone very well and I am impressed with their ability to learn. These Soldiers have adapted very well and every day has been a fun experi-

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Photo by Sgt. Rodney Foliente

An 8th IA Div. Soldier looks through a sighting device for a 120 mm mortar system during mortar training conducted by HHC, 2nd Combined Arms Bn., 8th Inf. Regt. at the 8th IA Div. headquarters March 24.



# TEAM: IA Soldiers complete mortar course

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ence.”

“Overall it is a much more professional system than the last time I was here,” Kane continued. “There are some very good noncommissioned officers and officers that show the ability to take the lead away from Coalition forces.”

The goal is to allow for a train-the-trainer environment where the 8th IA Soldiers can continue to train their fellow comrades, said Staff Sgt. Nick Schmidt, fire direction center chief with HHC.

“We’ve had a lot of success with using students from previous classes to act as training assistants, said Schmidt, who comes from Littleton, Colo. “These student instructors gain more experience to continue training their own Soldiers after we’re gone.”

The course not only helped with mortar systems, but also with advancing Soldiers’ overall skills, such as map reading, said Sgt. Haider, with the 8th IA Div.

His mortar team won the competition, but Haider modestly downplayed taking the lead.

“The goal for this training is to learn and it doesn’t matter who won,” said Haider. “I think we are all the winners. This training will help us maintain security and defeat those who threaten the peace and lives of innocent Iraqis.”

“The Coalition forces have given us a great deal of training, now and in the past. We have gained experience and



Photo by Sgt. Rodney Foliente

An 8th IA Div. mortar team competes against their comrades on a 120 mm mortar system on the final day of a six-week course for mortar training, conducted by Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, at the 8th IA Div. headquarters March 24.

we have become a stronger and greater army for it,” the 11-year Iraqi Army veteran continued. “It is good for us to work side by side with (CF) because we learn from them and also build friendships. My relationship with U.S. Soldiers has been great.”

“I want to remain a Soldier and continue to protect my country, my people

and my family. The security in the area has been good and there have been no big issues,” Haider said. “I’m confident we will be able to control the security of the country when the Coalition forces leave. We are stronger than we ever were and have proven our ability day after day.”

## THE Mountain View

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### Contributing Units

172nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team  
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4th BCT, 1st Cavalry Division  
41st Fires Brigade  
343rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment  
793rd Military Police Battalion  
Division Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mtn. Div.  
Task Force 449



## 10th Mtn. Div. salsa ensemble wraps up Iraq tour with concert

SGT. BRANDON LEFLORE  
MND-C



CAMP VICTORY, Iraq – The 10th Mountain Division Band salsa ensemble, Grupo Histeria, gave its final performance for servicemembers and civilians from all over Victory Base Complex with a live salsa night at the Lion's Den Morale Welfare and Recreation Center on Camp Slayer March 21.

Listeners were enthralled by the music and danced in the streets until midnight as the ensemble played 28 of their most energetic salsa tunes. The band played a mix of salsa and meringue, including songs such as "Baila que Baila," "La Vida Es Un Carnivale," and "Tu Sonrisa," among others.

"I love their music," said Pfc. Tiffanee Roach, chaplain assistant with 303rd Military Intelligence Battalion, 504th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, "I come here every Saturday to dance and relieve stress."

Every Saturday night the Lion's Den hosted salsa night to a group of appreciative service members and civilians.

"[Salsa night] gives me something to look forward to during the week," said Spc. Nadine Henderson, flight operations specialist with 142nd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 10th Mtn. Div., and New York native. "I enjoy it every time and forget that I'm in Iraq."

The salsa ensemble, led by Sgt. 1st Class Gary Yurgans, is not only comprised of members of the 10th Mtn. Div. Band, but 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers as well. Throughout their tour the band has had a constant flow of Soldiers from other units play in the salsa ensemble.

"When we got here, the salsa band didn't exist, so we pulled Soldiers from outside 10th Mtn. Div.," Yurgans said. "It took about three months to prepare for our first performance, which was for Hispanic Heritage Month."

When Yurgans discovered there was an interest for a salsa ensemble, he was eager to take charge. He used his salsa band experience from deployments in Panama and Korea to build a successful band here.

Though this was the final performance in Iraq for the 10th Mtn. Div.'s salsa ensemble, they intend to continue playing together when they return to the U.S.



photos by Sgt. Brandon LeFlore

(Above) Staff Sgt. Viola Colley, 1st Cav. Div. Band, plays the Timbales, Sgt. Julio Sandoval, 10th Mtn. Div. Band, plays the Congas and Sgt. Samuel Salinas, 1st Cav. Div. Band, plays the Bongos and cowbell during the final performance in Iraq of Grupo Histeria, a salsa ensemble from the 10th Mtn. Div. band, at Lion's Den MWR on Camp Slayer March 21.

(Left) Spc. Alexander Ansbergs, 10th Mtn. Div. Band, plays the trombone during the final performance in Iraq of Grupo Histeria.

(Below) Service members and civilians from all over Victory Base Complex dance in the streets of Camp Slayer to the music of Grupo Histeria, March 21.





# MND-C Commander hosts farewell dinner for MNC-I Commander



Photo by Sgt. Brandon LeFlore

(Top Left) Maj. Gen. Michael Oates, commander, Multi-National Division-Center, presents a plaque with excellence coins from MND-C and Multi-National Corps-Iraq senior leadership. Senior leaders attended a farewell dinner for Lt. Gen. Lloyd Austin III, MNC-I Commander, hosted by Oates March 26. (Top Right) Lt. Gen. Lloyd Austin III, MNC-I Commander attends a dinner held in his honor organized by senior leaders from Multi-National Division-Center and Multi-National Corps-Iraq. (Right) Senior leaders from Multi-National Division-Center and Multi-National Corps-Iraq share dinner and conversation.



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# Headline Round-up

## World News:

**BANGKOK** - A Thai firefighter dressed as Spider-Man to rescue an autistic boy who climbed onto a third-floor balcony because he was nervous on his first day of school. Firefighter Somchai Yoosabai was called in after the 11-year-old boy's teachers and mother failed to coax him off the ledge on March 23. Overhearing a conversation between the boy's mother and his teachers about his love for superheroes, Somchai rushed back to the fire station to change into a Spider-Man costume. "I told him Spider-Man is here to save you. No monster will hurt you now." Somchai, who keeps costumes of Spider-Man and a Japanese superhero Ultraman to liven up fire drills at schools, said the teary-eyed boy broke into a smile and started walking into his arms.

## Sports News:

**EAGLE RIVER, Alaska** - Alaska's Mount Redoubt continued its volcanic explosions March 27, sending an ash cloud 50,000 feet above sea level and prompting drivers to head to the auto parts store for new air filters. The National Weather Service said most of the ash was expected to fall to the north, but trace amounts of ash from the eruption and smaller ones overnight could fall on Anchorage itself. Since the series of eruptions began March 22, the volcano has had several bursts. One on Thursday sent ash 65,000 feet high. The last time the volcano had erupted was during a four-month period in late 1989 and early 1990.

## Odd News:

**CLALLAM BAY, Wash.** - An inmate's attempt to heat up sausages in his toilet went up in smoke when the cooking fire forced a unit evacuation at a Washington state prison. Clallam Bay Corrections Center spokeswoman Denise Larson says 130 inmates were evacuated to a dining hall when smoke was spotted coming from a sewer vent pipe Wednesday evening. She says the smoke was traced to the inmate's cell and he admitted to trying to heat up snack sausage bought from a prison store in the stainless steel toilet. The inmate's identity has not been released. The toilet chef has been placed in segregation pending discipline at the prison on Washington's Olympic Peninsula.

## Quote of the Day

*"I tend to live in the past because most of my life is there." - Herb Caen*

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For the  
answer to  
today's puzzle,  
go to:



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## AROUND THE COMMUNITY

### Fishbowl Gym

April 11

Pirate's Cove Run 5K/10K.

Registration begins @ 7 a.m.,

race begins @ w8 a.m.

T-shirts awarded to top

finishers.

### Freedom Chapel

Sundays

Protestant (Traditional) @ 10  
a.m.

Roman Catholic Mass @ 12 p.m.

LDS service @ 2 p.m.

Eastern Orthodox @ 4 p.m.

Protestant (Contemporary) @ 12  
p.m.

Mondays

A History of Christianity @  
7 p.m.

Tuesdays

God & the Military @ 6:30 p.m.

Wednesdays

Guitar Lessons @ 7 p.m.

Thursdays

Catholic Choir practice @ 5:30  
p.m.

Fridays

Catholic hour @ 6:30 p.m.