



The Duck & Cover



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Iraqi civil defense agency hosts fire rescue showcase

by Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, JASG-C Office of Public Affairs

Iraqi Firefighters Showcase Skills

Sirens, explosions, fires, rescue ladders and emergency response teams dominated the Iraqi Civil Defense agency's skill and equipment demonstration. Iraqi fire fighters conducted the demonstration in Baghdad on July 19 for more than 150 guests to include the Iraqi Minister of the Interior, Jawad Kazem al-Bolani, the Deputy Minister of the Interior, Ahmed Ali al-Khafajdi, and dozens of Coalition Force members.

The on-site demonstration included a photo display featuring more than 250 images of Iraqi civil defense forces responding to terrorist acts, fires, auto accidents and other emergencies. Following the photo display, fire fighters demonstrated their ability to put out a car fire; rescue

an individual trapped in a vehicle and use a ladder truck to rescue a fire victim from the top of a four story building.

The demonstration facility, located in the Inter-

national Zone, also serves as a fire/rescue training facility for Baghdad. Col. Laith Abbas, Baghdad fire chief, has served with the Iraqi Civil Defense agency since 1987. He has

been subjected to several assassination attempts by explosive devices and several of his employees were killed at the hands of terrorists.

"After the war every-

thing changed...We got new trucks and equipment. People understood our jobs and sometimes the people protect us from the terrorists – they shoot the terrorists," said Abbas.

Abbas said that he had lost 23 fire fighters because of terrorist acts. The JASG-C Installations team has increased the fire fighters ability to communicate with the IZ Police and other security elements by getting the fire fighters access to the Advanced First Responder Network. "The Advanced First Responder Network has been in place elsewhere for over a year; we have secured permission for Iraqi Fire Department in the IZ to use this system," said Col. Jane Curtis, of Stillwater. The system gives the Iraqi public a direct link to the central dispatching for emergency services.

While partnering with the JASG-C, several Iraqi Fire Fighters traveled to the United States and met with International Fire

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Photo by Capt. Geoff Legler, JASG Public Affairs

Iraqi fire fighters use a ladder truck to rescue a man who was "trapped" on a roof-top during a fire fighting demonstration for Iraqi officials, Coalition Force representatives and members of the Iraqi media at their fire station in the International Zone.

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BRIGADIER GENERAL

★ **MYLES L. DEERING** ★

Napoleon Bonaparte said that “Victory belongs to the most persevering.” As the time of our departure draws closer, we must persevere in our duties. For some of you, your work is directly related to re-deployment; for others, your focus remains on the work in the International Zone. In either case, we must all focus on the mission until it is complete.

The “victory” to which Napoleon was referring is not the same kind of victory which we will experience. Instead, our victory will come from the reflection on our success and progress. Over the past months,



we have experienced a great deal of success, and we have contributed greatly to the progress of Iraq at this critical stage in its history. The JASG-C has achieved great things due to your efforts—the efforts of every Soldier, Sailor and Airmen of this organization.

We have built upon the successes of past JASG-Cs and we have a responsibility to ensure that we provide our successors with that same opportunity to thrive. In other words, we cannot lose our intensity. We must focus every effort not only on completing our tasks, but also providing

our replacements the opportunity to excel. You can do this by starting to think about the information your replacement will need to ease their transition into your job. Much of their initial success will be based upon the insight you provide.

I’m not asking you to forget that we are nearing the end of our tour. Rather, I am asking you to maintain your intensity and focus on the task at hand while using foresight to ensure the success of our final weeks and a smooth transition for our replacements. The success of our mission here has been and will continue to be attributed to your exceptional efforts. Continue those efforts for just a few more weeks—persevere—and we will be home before you know it.

The Command Sergeant Major

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR



DEAN BRIDGES



As we near the end of our tour here we have also entered into possibility the busiest time of our deployment. Preparing for our demobilization, the upcoming International Zone transformation, and the soon to arrive RIP with our replacements. And if that was not enough to keep us busy, we will be packing our connex, doing equipment inspections, and finishing up on NCOER’s, OER’s and other admin-



istrative requirements. During all of this we must stay focused on those tasks that must be completed during our day to day operations. Yet again the heat will continue to rise though out the month of August. With all of this going on, I want each of you to check your battle buddy, and yourselves to insure we are doing everything with safety foremost in our minds. We must not allow safety standards to drop, nor allow our fo-

cus to be clouded by looking to far forward. The International Zone still has the possibility to be dangerous, stay alert, and practice those Force Protection measures until the end.

As the RIP approaches I want each of you to develop good plans, and have good continuity books for your replacements. Understand that a seamless, smooth transition with our replacements is as much a part of our success as all the accomplishments we have achieved thus far. The more our replacements get from us, the better they will do, and that

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CHAPLAIN (COLONEL) JACK BYAS



Soon we will be going home. We need to stay focused on our mission here but we also need to start thinking about reunion with our families.

Mac Davis used to sing a country song entitled, "Oh Lord, It's Hard to Be Humble, When You're Perfect in Every Way." The Lyrics are rather humorous as the singer goes on and on about his own goodness and rightness.

The truth is that it is hard to be humble. Humility does not come naturally to most of us. Perhaps it is because we tend to equate humility



with weakness and we certainly do not want to be perceived as weak. The simplest definition of humility is modesty. Its opposite is arrogance or self-importance.

A friend of mine would sometimes quip, "Look, I may not always be right . . . but I am never wrong!" I suppose we all have a bit of this attitude especially when we are challenged. During the stressful days of pre-deployment, there are many unknowns. Add to that the pressure of trying to plan adequately for the absence of a family member for a lengthy period of

time. We wish we could figure all the angles, the possibilities, and have the answers to the "what-ifs." Unfortunately, we can't. This can be a very HUMBLING experience. We are uncomfortable with saying, "I don't know."

Now we are facing re-deployment, it is important to understand that we still can't figure everything out and there will be uncertainty. An attitude of humility at times like this doesn't mean that we have lost control or that there is nothing we can do. Though we are not perfect, we are capable. And if you need resources or help with family issues, don't let stubbornness or pride prevent you from getting what you need.

Worship and Bible study times and locations

Protestant Worship Schedule

Sunday
1030

General Christian Worship

1815

Contemporary
Protestant Worship

Ecumenical Worship Schedule

Friday
1830

Jewish Shabbat

Saturday
1000

Orthodox Worship Service

Sunday

1200

Episcopal/Lutheran/Anglican

1400

Latter Day Saints

2000

Spanish Latter Day Saints
@ Chapel Annex

2000

Church of Christ
@ Embassy RM# S-214B

Catholic Worship Schedule

Monday-Friday

1200

Mass at Embassy Annex Chapel

1900

Rosary at Embassy Chapel

Saturday

1100

Mass at CSH (Hospital)
(Confession available before Mass)

1830

Mass @ Embassy
Annex Chapel
(Confession available before Mass)

Sunday

0915

Mass @ Camp Prosperity
(Confession available before Mass)

1630

Mass @ Embassy Chapel
(Confession available before Mass)

2000

Spanish Mass at
Embassy Chapel



DPW improves sidewalks, safety for pedestrians

by Lt. Col Rhonda McGuire, JASG-C Office of Public Affairs

Everyday hundreds of pedestrians are forced to zigzag from one side to the other as they walk on the sidewalks in the International Zone. Why? Many of the sidewalks suffer from years of neglect and the ravages of war. One must look down when walking to avoid tripping or falling. In the U.S. we take our nice flat sidewalks for granted but in the IZ walking on the sidewalk can be as difficult as traversing an obstacle course.

The department of public works recently overtook an area in Baghdad to replace a span of sidewalk measuring 131 meters long and five meters wide. The new six inch deep sidewalk makes it safer for Iraqis and other pedestrian traffic to walk through that section of the International Zone. The two week project is part of the IDIQ concrete maintenance that includes not only sidewalk maintenance, but also maintenance to T-walls and other barriers throughout the IZ.

A Iraqi local company employs 29 Iraqis laborers, three engineers and one cook at the jobsite. As the concrete truck pours out the lumpy, wet concrete; dozens of local Iraqis use wheel-



Photo by Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, JASG Public Affairs
Local contractors pour and spread concrete into a form during a sidewalk construction project in the International Zone.

barrows, shovels, hoes and trowels to spread the concrete over the steel rebar that will give the sidewalk its strength.

Staff Sgt. Christina Matlock, a member of the JASG-C's Department of Public Works supervises the site each morning. "This stretch of sidewalk will really improve this area for local Iraqis," said Matlock. Matlock spends time supervising several

ongoing concrete projects for the DPW. She orders T-walls, duck and cover bunkers and has provided oversight on vehicle wash rack structures.

Matlock decided to make this sidewalk special by placing two military coins into the concrete before it hardened. "We wanted to place the coins here as a reminder of our work," she said. The 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery Soldiers work at the checkpoint area with local Iraqis where the new sidewalk is being created. The two coins were from the JASG-C and 3-29 FA.

The IZ has its own concrete plant which Matlock visits routinely. "It's like going shopping at Lowe's for products," said Matlock.

In fact, Matlock spends so much time dealing with concrete construction projects that locals have nicknamed her "Concrete".

Matlock realizes the importance of her job as well as the potential longevity of the sidewalks and other concrete structures she has helped construct. "I am really happy to have the opportunity to do something in Iraq that is going to be here long after we leave; it's a very rewarding job for sure," said Matlock.



Photo by Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, JASG Public Affairs
Staff Sgt. Christina Matlock (center) supervises as local contractors smooth a section of wet concrete shortly after pouring it into a form. Matlock supervises many of the concrete construction project in the IZ.



U.S. and Iraqi partnership increasing security at checkpoints

by Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, JASG-C Office of Public Affairs

Vehicles with hoods popped, parked in lines of five under cover look abandoned. Empty your pockets take the battery out of your cell phone; surrender all personal items into a basket. Vehicle owners wait in separate areas for individual body searches. The good news – security measures ensure safety for Iraqis and government officials to conduct daily business.

Coalition forces continue to enforce security standards and prepare to pass the baton to the Iraqi Army. Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery, from Fort Carson, Colo., occupy checkpoints in the International Zone, Baghdad, Iraq. “All Iraqis occupy forward positions at the security checkpoints; we hope to transition more positions to the Iraqi Army,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jason Maynard, 3-29 FA.

Security checkpoints can be complicated and confusing pathways to enter into secure areas; the International Zone is no exception. One finds people from many different countries as private security contractors occupy much of the battle space. Peruvians, Ugandans, contractors, local Iraqis, Coalition Forces and interpreters make up



Photo by Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, JASG Public Affairs
Two unidentified Iraqi Soldiers stand on either side of Sgt. Bob Chatmon and Spc. Jeremy Payne. The U.S. Soldiers are members of the 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery and assist the Iraqis at a security checkpoint which leads into the IZ. The Iraqi Army has taken the lead on all security checkpoints.

much of the battle space security. All of these different entities can find challenges in accomplishing the mission.

“When we got here, people were telling the guys what to do – we changed to more team work – I am learning Swahili and Arabic.

Ugandans conduct dog searches and people see us working together,” said Spc. Jeremy Payne, 3-29 FA.

One Iraqi Army soldier commented, “We learn how to be conscious, aware and serious in our job – to work as one team.”

The partnership has also led to Soldiers helping Iraqis in other ways. The Soldiers scrounged up paint and supplies to help the Iraqi Army. At checkpoints, Iraqi soldiers may reside make shift facilities. “We painted walls, brought in some old wall lockers, beds, mattresses, etc., that we could donate for our Iraqi partners,” said Maynard. The items were going to be discarded by contractors.

The checkpoint partnership allows traveling Iraqis to be seen first by Iraqi Armed Forces. Pedestrians can talk to a local Iraqi first in their native language and then see Iraqi and U.S. forces working together. “The goal is to have Iraqis at all security checkpoints and we are moving toward that goal,” said Capt. Dan Hoeprich, Battery B commander, 3-29 FA. The battalion is on a 15 month tour to Iraq and will return home sometime between February and March 2009.



Photo by Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, JASG Public Affairs
Sgt. 1st Class Jason Maynard and Spc. Jeremy Payne, 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery, stand at a security checkpoint with their Iraqi counterparts. The Soldiers assist the Iraqis at security checkpoints around the International Zone as part of the checkpoint hand-off process.



Iraqi government hosts tourism and travel conference

by Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, JASG-C Office of Public Affairs

Members of the JASG-C recently participated in tourism fair held at the Al-Mansour Hotel in Baghdad. The purpose of the fair was to showcase Iraqi tourism sites, provide training, conduct a tourism poster contest and gauge progress among provincial tourism.

The Tourism Fair presented detailed improvement requirements for each site, including the need for higher - end hotels, specifically in Najaf and Karbala.

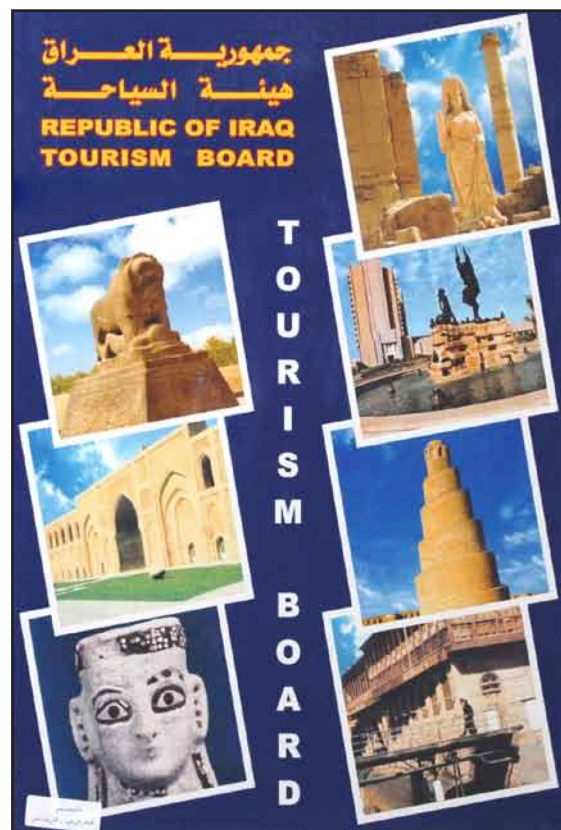
Navy Capt. Tom Karnowski, director of installations, said, "Our responsibility is the International Zone. It was by luck that we've become involved with tourism. As the seat of government, tourism takes a back seat within the IZ. We provide information and services only."

The JASG-C team is supporting a joint venture with Al A'aras Island and bringing a developer on board.

Iraq's Ministry for Tourism and Antiquities is requesting proposals for the development of Jazirat Al-A'ras, a romantic island in the heart of historic Baghdad, on the Tigris River. The city of Baghdad has a depth of history and a cultural legacy that can be the basis for attracting and fostering tourism.

There are two tenants at Al-A'ras Island providing contractor services to Coalition Forces. The government of Iraq foresees potential revenue as the island is developed for tourism. "The Iraqis want to make it a place that people will want to come to in Baghdad," said Capt. Roy Banes, of Tuttle.

Banes is the director of real proper-



Capt. Roy Banes (right) shakes hands with Hamod Al-Yakobi, the Iraqi chairman of tourism shortly after the Iraqi tourism fair had adjourned.

Photo by Lt. Col Rhonda McGuire, JASG Public Affairs

ty and brings business experience to the Base and Urban Planning group; he has worked in business for over 12 years. "This mission is not very different from going to work for a company each day; I use my communication skills and management more than shooting my weapon or combat skills," said Banes. The JASG-C is assisting the government of Iraq with soliciting for developers and a master plan which may include: a historic Baghdad village for tourists, parks, restaurants, and shops to accommodate locals and the international community.

A request for proposals outlines a plan to present the island to private developers; which will be released by the Government of Iraq when final approval is received.



JASG-C Soldier hosts Barbie pizza party for local girls

by Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, JASG-C Office of Public Affairs

Every second, two Barbie dolls are sold somewhere in the world. Barbie doll is currently a \$1.5 billion industry. Close to one billion fashions have been produced for Barbie and her friends since 1959. So what do you think little Iraqi girls ask for from American female Soldiers? You guessed it; Barbie dolls.

On a hot dusty day in Baghdad, Iraq, six Iraqi sisters joined in a Barbie doll pizza party. The party was organized and hosted by Sgt. Leigh Airey, of Stillwater, who is currently serving with the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in Baghdad's International Zone. Airey works for the Base and Urban Planning (BURP) office where she deals with property lease agreements.

Airey spends a lot of time visiting and inspecting properties that the U.S. leases from the Iraqi government, which gives her the opportunity to visit with Iraqi families who live in the five-square mile IZ. During these visits, she often spends time playing with the local children

and delivering humanitarian aid. Airey has a young daughter of her own and enjoys interacting with the local children.

A few months ago when some little Iraqi girls asked for Barbie dolls; Airey thought it would be fun to organize a Barbie party. Her mother, Rita, sewed party bags together and filled the bags with Barbie dolls, clothes, crayons, stickers, coloring books and accessories. Airey's younger sister, MacKenzie, picked out an extra outfit for each of the Barbies and her father made sure that all of the Barbie party packages were shipped in time to arrive for the party. Airey's mom also sent a plastic Barbie tablecloth, Barbie paper plates, and Barbie napkins. During the party everyone enjoyed some pizza and soft drinks and the girls opened the Barbies and began playing with them.

Airey received special approval from 45th Infantry Brigade Commander, Brig. Gen. Myles Deering, to dress as Barbie and wear her long blond hair down. Airey filled the role wearing a white Barbie doll T-shirt, jean shorts and pink platform shoes with four inch heels.

When asked how it made her feel to bring a little American culture to these little Iraq girls Airey said, "It makes me feel



Photo by Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, JASG Public Affairs
Sgt. Leigh Airey (center) poses with five of the sisters and the girl's mother stands behind them with the sixth child.

wonderful! I just wanted them to have an incredibly fun day."

Airey also spoke of the bond she has formed with the girls saying, "It is so amazing to create the bond with these little girls that I have, especially when you consider the language barrier. Funny enough, both they and I speak "kid". I've gone over to visit them several times, and you'd never know we had no idea what the other saying. When playing with small children things like 'chase me, pick me up, tickle me, I'm teasing you, I don't want you to leave, and I love you'...are spoken in a neutral language that is common throughout the world.

Airey and several members of the Joint Area Support Group-Central spent more than two hours with the six girls and their mother before wrapping-up the party and returning to the Embassy Annex compound.

As they left the girl's home Airey commented, "I have so many wonderful memories to take home and share with so many people, and I think today might just have been my favorite one yet."



Photo by Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, JASG Public Affairs
Sgt. Leigh Airey watches as one of the six sisters plays with a Barbie paddle ball. Also pictured are (center to right) Staff Sgt. Xuan Bohlman, Capt. Carrie Remer and 2nd Lt. Lavonda Cathey.



National Guard and Reserve forces get new GI Bill

by Terry Howell, *Military.com*

Members of the Guard and Reserve are slated to get a brand new GI Bill benefit that surpasses anything offered to Reserve Component members in the last 20 years.

Many Guard and Reserve service-members and veterans activated since Sept. 11, 2001 will soon see a new package of education benefits. This new Post 9/11 GI Bill boasts a comprehensive education benefits package and, best of all, it offers National Guardsmen and Reserves the same benefits as their active-duty counterparts.

The new bill goes well beyond helping to pay for tuition; many veterans who served after Sept. 11, 2001, will get full tuition and fees, a new monthly housing stipend, and a \$1,000 a year stipend for books and supplies. The new bill also gives Reserve and Guard members who have been activated for more than 90 days since 9/11 access to the same GI Bill benefits.

If you are in the Guard or Reserve or are a veteran who served at least 90 consecutive days on active duty in the Armed Forces since Sept. 11, 2001, you're eligible. However, the amount of benefits you receive under this program are determined by the actual amount of accumulated post 9/11 active-duty service you have. To be eligible for the full benefit, you must have 36 months of active duty service since Sept. 11, 2001 or have been discharged due to a service-connected disability.

The Post 9/11 GI Bill will provide up to 100% of your tuition. In addition, the program provides a monthly

housing stipend and a stipend of up to \$1,000 a year for books and supplies.

Tuition Rates - Under the new GI Bill you will be provided tuition up to the highest established charges for full-time undergraduate students charged by the public institution of higher education in the State in which you are enrolled. One of the added features of this tuition payment plan is that the tuition will be paid directly

Here is a quick reference showing the percentage of total combined benefit eligibility based on the following periods of post 9/11 service:

100% - 36 or more total months
 100% - 30 or more consecutive days with Disability related Discharge.
 90% - 30 total months
 80% - 24 total months
 70% - 18 total months
 60% - 12 total months
 50% - 6 total months
 40% - 90+ consecutive days

to the school, relieving you of the responsibility. This is similar to the process used for military tuition assistance.

Based on 2008 in-state tuition rates, the anticipated annual tuition payment rate for 2009 will be just over \$6,000. The low being Wyoming at \$3,500 a year and Michigan which is the highest payment in-state tuition rate at \$13,000.

Monthly Housing Stipend - If you are enrolled in a traditional college program as a full time or three-quarter time student, you will be paid a

monthly housing stipend equal to the monthly amount of the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for an E-5 with dependents. The average housing stipend will be approximately \$1,100 a month. However, if you attend distance learning programs such as correspondence courses and online you will not qualify for this stipend.

Book and Supply Stipend - You will receive a lump sum payment the first month of each quarter, semester, or term. The payment will help cover the cost of books, supplies, equipment, and other educational fees for that academic term. The payment amount will be equal to either a quarter or half of the annual \$1,000 cap for that academic year, depending on how the academic year is divided – quarter or semester terms.

Extended Benefits Expiration Date - Unlike the Montgomery GI Bill, the new GI Bill will allow you to use this benefit for up to 15 years after your last discharge or separation from active duty.

This new GI Bill is set to go into effect on August 1, 2009. However, as with any new legislation, it will take some time for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to sort out all the details. Benefits will not be paid for any training or education programs completed before July 31, 2009.

Only the Department of Veterans Affairs can answer specific questions about your education benefits. Call 1-888-GIBILL-1 to speak directly to a VA representative about your benefits eligibility.





Staff Sergeant Axel Sanchez

by Sgt. Shawn Riley, JASG-C Office of Public Affairs



The IZ Badge Office is one of the Joint Area Support Group-Central's most challenging work environments. This office has many people working together to accomplish their mission. However, there is one person in particular that manages many of the situations that arise and helps to ensure that customers are serviced in a timely manner.

When visiting the Badge Office at Ocean Cliffs it is likely the first person to greet you will be Staff Sgt. Axel Sanchez. He is the Non-Commissioned Officer in charge of the waiting room. Sanchez says, "I make sure applications are properly filed out; customers have the correct documentation, identification and passports."

Sanchez, a native Spanish speaker, quickly developed a report with the Peruvian Triple-Canopy security force whose job it is to ensure the safety of everyone attempting to acquire an International Zone badge. This report helps him to manage the controlled chaos that is a constant at Ocean Cliffs.

This isn't Sanchez's first opportunity to manage stressful situations. During his first deployment he served in Operation Iraqi Freedom in the spring and summer of 2003. Back then his mission was recovering disabled vehicles on the road to Baghdad during the initial invasion. He personally recovered over 150 vehicles on his way north.

Sanchez began his Army career as an active duty Soldier in 1999. He spent five years as a diesel mechanic and was stationed at Fort Hood, Texas; Korea and finally he finished his active duty enlistment at Ft. Sill, Okla. Sanchez intends to stay in the



military long enough to retire.

Sanchez was born and raised in the village of Bananera, Izabal, Guatemala. As a child he attended school there and enjoyed playing soccer in his spare time. His father worked in the local banana plantation to earn a living for the family. In 1985 the Sanchez family decided to move to America in search of a better life. There were already Guatemalans living in Norman so they settled there. When he arrived in Norman; Sanchez was 15 and spoke very little English.

"It was a challenge attending school; it took me about a year to

learn English through communicating with others and watching movies," said Sanchez. Even with the adversity of not being a native English speaker he still managed to graduate on time from Norman High School in 1990. After living in the U.S. for 18 years and serving his adopted country he finally earned his American citizenship.

After high school Sanchez majored in aviation for two years at Rose State. His goal was to become a pilot. However, after his second year of college Sanchez started a family. He and his wife Maria have two children Emily, 14, and Alex, 5. They live in The Village a suburb Oklahoma City.

In his civilian career Sanchez is a mail carrier for The U.S. Postal Service in Edmond. Sanchez says "I walk about four miles a day, making more than 200 deliveries." He began his postal career in 2003 after he completed his active duty military service.

Regardless of the mission that Sanchez is given, those around him can always count on him to perform it to the best of his ability. He never compromises his values and tries to treat his soldiers with fairness and respect. His adaptability to changing situations is an asset to the JASG-C and the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. America is fortunate to have Staff Sgt. Axel Sanchez.





1st Sergeant James Ivy

by Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, JASG-C Office of Public Affairs



1st Sgt. James Ivy's career reads like a timeline of major American and World events: 1995 The Oklahoma City bombing, 1999 Oklahoma's May tornadoes, 2004 Afghanistan, 2005 Hurricane Katrina and 2008 Iraq. This Army National Guard Soldier exemplifies sacrifice and service to country.

A humble Soldier who raised his right hand in 1991 in St. Paul, Minnesota; Ivy transferred to the Oklahoma Army National Guard in 1995. The Oklahoma City Bombing, on April 19, 1995, claimed 168 lives and left over 800 people injured. "The most rewarding military experience I have had was working in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing...pulling security and shifting through debris.... Soldiers taking care of Oklahomans," said Ivy.

The May 1999 tornadoes devastated Oklahoma. It is no surprise that Oklahoma guardsmen were on duty in the wake of the State's worst tornadoes. Ivy was called to a command post to direct traffic on a four lane road with another Soldier. He was hit by car – flying over the vehicle and landing on the ground. His leg was broken in seven places subsequently leading to five surgeries on his left knee. His knee contains a metal plate and seven screws. Yet, despite this injury, he will not accept a physical profile to modify his Army physical fitness

requirements. He still runs 2 miles, does sit ups and push-ups just like the Soldiers he leads every day.

In 2004, Ivy and 800 other 45th Infantry Brigade Soldiers deployed to Afghanistan. He worked in administration supporting teams that trained the Afghan Army. "I



helped process 600 Combat Infantry Badges and five Purple Hearts...we processed over 1,100 awards for Soldiers. It was rewarding to see awards processed for Soldiers from beginning to end," said Ivy.

All of Ivy's service has one common thread – working with outside agencies. In New Orleans, he served as part of Task Force Orleans, providing security and relief to Louisiana's citizens with hundreds of other National Guard Soldiers.

During his current deployment in Iraq, Ivy has had the opportunity to work with the Department of State,

Department of Defense, contractors, civilians, local Iraqi government officials and all branches of military service. Ivy, an infantryman by trade, was more than prepared for the onslaught of rockets that pummeled the IZ on Easter and for the next six weeks.

Accountability of Servicemembers following each rocket attack was crucial. "We got accountability down to 20 minutes after the alarms sounded; I am proud of our Soldiers who provided aid to injured people during the attacks," said Ivy. Ivy believes over 80% of the Headquarters Company Soldiers will receive the Combat Action Badge.

Ivy's wife, Tina heads the household while her husband is serving overseas. She is no different than hundreds of other military spouses – taking care of two young sons: AJ, 7 and Wesley 11. She works full-time for LaPetite Learning Center and takes classes at Oklahoma City Community College. She also leads the family support group for Headquarters Company; calling spouses and others each week. "I am most proud of my wife, going to college, taking care of two boys and she still sends me an email every day," said Ivy.

Ivy's next mission is to prepare the Soldiers of Headquarters Company for demobilization and the trip home to Oklahoma.



Not only man's best friend, but a frontline defense

by Maj. Jim Gill, JASG-C Security Directorate

It is the middle of the afternoon and the traffic is heavy at the entry control point. Personnel are coming and going and the vehicles are lined up for inspection before they are allowed to enter the International Zone. As the explosive detection dog goes through his procedures of walking through the vehicles all of the sudden he sits down. This is the sign that he has found something. Immediately the dog is pulled off of the vehicle and the second dog and handler are sent to check out the same set of vehicles. Again, the second dog makes contact at the same place. At which point the entry control point is closed and the Explosives Ordnance and Demolitions Team is called in to check out the vehicle.

This is not a regular occurrence; however, it occurs often enough that the dogs, handlers and Soldiers on site are trained and ready to react. The International Zone is one of the highest profile areas in Iraq. Current intelligence assessments show that anti-Iraqi forces will continue to pursue methods for gaining access or smuggling explosives into the IZ. Being able to secure the IZ from these attacks is critical not only to the success of the Government of Iraq, but the Coalition Forces and the U.S. One of the first defenses for finding the explosives is the explosive detection dogs.

The dogs that are conducting the inspections at the entry con-

trol points are mainly a shepherd breed; however, they each have an American flavor. They were each trained in the U.S. at the Hill Country Dog Center which is just outside of San Antonio, Texas. Hill Country specializes in all aspects of police dog training. They



Photo provided

Dog handler Vincent Gimei and his dog Charlie.

import over 40 different European dogs of various breeds. Although these dogs are not trained as attack dogs, they are very protective of their handlers. A tip that has been learned firsthand is never approach one of these fellows and his handler straight on. When this happens they feel that you are there to attack them or their handler and they will get very defensive. When a dog is with the handler, always approach him from the rear.

The current contractor for the Joint Area Support Group – Cen-

tral is Sabre International. Sabre is based out of the United Kingdom; however they have forward offices here in the International Zone. The site lead, Mr. Robin Storie, has been working with explosive detection dogs since 1985 when he enlisted with the British

Royal Army Veterinary Corps. Since then he has worked in various security positions overseeing explosive detection dogs, as well narcotics detection dogs. The Kennel Master is Mr. Johannes Elspetrus, better known as Flum. Flum is from South Africa and is a little over 6'7" tall and weighs in excess of 300 pounds. He is responsible for ensuring the dogs are well kept, groomed and he oversees their daily training. He also manages his own set of dogs which are used to back up the dogs on site. All of the handlers come from Uganda. They are an excellent group of guys who are willing to do whatever is necessary to

protect their dogs and the International Zone.

On an average day these dogs survey over 3,000 cars, trucks and motorcycles. When temperatures are over 110 degrees it makes for quite a test for the dogs. However, they are more than up to the challenge. All of these dogs currently in use are new to Iraq and are still becoming acclimatized to the conditions. Just like you and I, it takes some time to get used to the heat, as well as, the other adverse con-

Continued on page 18



Sometimes a BURP can be a really good thing

by Lt. Col. Louis Gibson, Basing and Urban Planning

So who is BURP, Basing and Urban Planning? With all the entities within the IZ doing hundreds of different functions and missions, with all the eyes of the world peering into everything going on in the IZ, and with a finite space of the Department of Defense controlled facilities it is perhaps easy to see the IZ as a fragile baby needing much TLC. The Support Operations Directorate puts the baby to bed at night and keeps it fed, Security keeps it safe, DPW cleans it and when the baby gets fussy, the BURP give it a couple of firm pats of the back and gets the baby to belch.

What exactly does the BURP do? Occasionally you might see us running from the “trailer of death” to a duck and cover at FOB Blackhawk. Other times, you may find us peering through office doors at the Embassy counting phones and computers. On occasion, we suit up in our IBA and attend meetings at the municipality buildings in Baghdad. The scope of what we do fills the entire spectrum of operations within the IZ.

We have Air Force, Navy, Army, Civilians and local nationals working with us. With all the different factions, the day starts off like any other normal office. Here is a synopsis of what you might find; Ralph Tharp (civilian) pops in requesting 3 command sized maps for a meeting he has at 8:30 a.m. Staff Sgt. Brian Enright jumps on this even though it is completely impossible to print 3 maps off so quickly. During the map printing, a discussion over Obama and McCain breaks out. Like gophers being flushed out by the rain, heads start popping up from the cubicles. Quickly, the conversation fades

away and Staff Sgt. Stephen Roberts is on his way to Pig Island (Baghdad Island) and to the Embassy to get the mail. In the meantime, Maj. Kris Evans is busily assembling a rugged team of Soldiers for his PSD. This is for the meeting at the Municipality building with the Karkh District Mayor. This entails almost all of the



BURP personnel. Cmdr. Langley has two people in his office, another one on the DSN line, and fourth on his MCI. It is now 9:00 a.m.

Further into the day, you might find Maj. Elaine Donnelly at the hospital busily measuring the rooms. It takes some time, but eventually all of the rooms are measured. This is all done for the eventual turnover of the IZ back to the government of Iraq. Every square inch of office space is confirmed. In the meantime, the fearsome PSD returns from the red zone with stories of explosions and gunfire, but thankfully no one is hurt. Lt. Col. Louis Gibson is bus-

ily rushing to his fourth meeting of the day while trying to schedule in lunch. The walk from Blackhawk to the chow hall and back is almost a mile. You will often find the officers of the BURP running from meeting to meeting, adjusting fire from each one to the next. The baby is always restless and as it grows and changes day to day and the BURP is there trying to put a book on its head to keep it from growing.

From one of the meetings, a request for office space has been dropped like a hammer on a nail. Master Sgt. John Clifton scrounges up his maps and heads off to the building to verify the space. Clifton starts the inspection of the building. Rooms that were on the map are now gone and new rooms not found on the map are there. Even though Clifton didn't have much experience with VISIO prior to coming here, he now works with it on a daily basis. You also might find Capt. Terry Hale snapping pictures of oil spills around Union III. The scope of his job is anywhere from collecting soil samples to inspecting transformers. Hale also plays a significant part in the closing down of FOB's and other properties.

The BURP is the tip of the spear in the transition and transformation of the IZ. On any given day, every member of the BURP finds themselves engaged in a new and exciting endeavor. The jobs can range from exciting and engaging to extremely tedious, but one thing is certain - 15 years from now we will be to look at the IZ and say that we had a direct and positive impact on their history, and future.



DPW assisting with restoration of Iraq military monument

by Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, JASG-C Office of Public Affairs

Baghdad's parks, zoos and museums have experienced a resurgence in recent months. Slowly, but surely points of interest in the International Zone are following suit and Government of Iraq officials are working toward the further development of parks and recreational areas in the IZ.

One of the most prominent and popular locations for visitors to the IZ is Iraq's Monument to the Unknown Soldier. Its splendor and size make it a must-see for visitors to the IZ.

Over the past five years the monument has suffered from neglect and fallen into a state of disrepair. Servicemembers from the JASG-C's Department of Public Works have partnered with the Iraqi Honor Guard, which resides at the facility, to restore the monument to its former grandeur.

Members of the DPW have begun repairs on the electrical system to improve living conditions for the Iraqi Honor Guard which resides at the monument. The monument has not received power from Baghdad's electrical grid for more than five

years. Former U.S. Ambassador Paul Bremmer gave the Honor Guard an electrical generator for power purposes, but the generator was too small to meet the facilities power needs. "Honor Guard members paid out of their own pockets to supply fuel for the generator – but could never get the quantities needed to provide adequate power," said Maj. Mark Hanley, an electrical engineer with the DPW.

Similar in theme to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery; Iraq's Monument to the Unknown Soldier was said to be inspired by the glorification of a martyr from the Iran-Iraq war. What looks like a flying saucer frozen in mid-flight actually represents a traditional shield (dira'a) dropping from the dying grasp of an Iraqi warrior.

The interior of the monument houses a museum which was vandalized shortly of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. "When I first heard about the monument, I wanted to do something to help the men of the Iraqi Honor Guard. After visiting the monument and seeing what bad shape it was in, I thought there was so much more that could be done. Once the renovations have been completed, I think the Iraqi people will have a national symbol that they can be proud of....it will be a place they will want to visit," said Lt. Andrew



Photo provided

The monument was designed to represent a traditional shield (dira'a) dropped from the dying grasp of an Iraqi warrior.

Nozik, of the DPW.

The 265 member Honor Guard, which consists of members of the Iraqi Army, Navy, Air Force and a military band, perform for VIP visits, Prime Minister Maliki, President Talibani, Iraqi officials, military funerals and other celebrations.

"The [Iraqi] people love and admire the Army...only the Army which is not for the government but for the Iraqi people," said Maj. Basim, commander of the Iraqi Honor Guard. Basim went onto say that the Iraqi Army is respected by the people in the streets. The Iraqi Army is not penetrated by militias who are loyal to a party, not the people. Saddam killed the former Minister of Defense because he was well liked – he killed anyone that the people loved, stated Basim.

"I hope the American Army will stay in Iraq until it is strong enough...the Iraqi people wish to live in peace like Americans," said Basim.

Work on the monument's electrical system is scheduled to be completed in the next two to three weeks with addition projects planned to follow.



Photo by Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, JASG Public Affairs

Sabah Al-Jumaily (center), a DPW consultant engineer and local resident, speaks to Maj. Basim, commander of the Iraqi Honor Guard.



Building relations by rebuilding the 215 Health Clinic

by Petty Officer 1st Class Ricky Jones, JASG-C Department of Public Works

As many of you know, one of the benefits of living in a country as prosperous as America is the access to a clean, sanitary and well maintained health clinics and hospitals. Now imagine having to go to a clinic where the facilities are not suited to provide adequate health care to the ones needing it the most. This was the situation at the 215 (Quadisiya) Health Clinic.

The 215 Health Clinic is located in the center of the 215 (Quadisiya) Apartments in the International Zone. It provides health care for the Iraqi citizens of the IZ, including many top officials. One of the many tasks in the rebuilding process of Iraq is to provide viable health care to the people of Iraq. With the combined efforts of the Government of Iraq and Joint Area Support Group-Central's Department of Public Works this job has gone from planning to completion.

This \$250,000.00 contract was awarded through a long bidding process to the Iraqi Rebuilding Society or IRS for short. This project started on the February 2, 2008 and completed on the July 3, 2008. The work involved such basic tasks as painting the entire interior and exterior of the clinic and replacing damaged ceiling tiles and lights; the more complex work such as adding on a new lab and storage room and completely rewiring the clinic to safely power the nine new

air conditioning units. There was a lot more work completed to bring the clinic up to a clean working environment but that would be a story in itself.

Petty Officer 1st Class Ricky Jones was assigned as the DPW project manager for this job and immediately set to work on establishing a good working relationship

design of the newly constructed perimeter fence, the type and color of the interior floor tile and the location of the new air conditioning units. Once the newly installed public announcement system was brought on line Mr. Furrad would occasionally play traditional Iraqi music to help soothe the minds of the patients of the clinic.

This story would not be complete without mentioning the incredible job that Iraqi Rebuilding Society did in fulfilling this contract. Mr. Hussam and Mr. Mohammed went above and beyond in a number of ways to include keeping the project on schedule. During the course of this project they developed a close friendship with not only Jones and various members of the DPW of-

fice but the clinic staff as well. Mr. Hussam would always ask, "When is the general coming?" Brigadier General Myles L. Deering, commander of the JASG-C and the 45th Infantry Brigade, would routinely come by the site to observe the outstanding work going on and to interact with the contractor and clinic staff. The contractors were ecstatic to have their picture taking with the general as well. Some of the guys went so far as to get dressed up in suits and ties for the photos. As with any construction project there are always unforeseen obstacles that come up from time to time. The IRS was always up to

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Photo by Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, JASG Public Affairs
Local contractors work on repairs to a wall inside the 215 clinic during the early stages of the restoration project.

with Mr. Hussam and Mr. Mohammed, the two engineers in charge of bringing the clinic up to acceptable standards. During the course of this project Jones had a chance to learn about the Iraqi culture and methods of construction as well as help teach his Iraqi counterparts many of the ways of American construction. The DPW office worked very closely with the clinic director, Mr. Furrad and the staff of the clinic. This helped to not only foster a sense of ownership of the clinic, but it helped to cultivate the "Hearts and Minds" ethos that our government has been actively promoting. Mr. Furrad personally chose the colors of the paint, the



Things every Soldier needs to do before leaving theater...

by Capt. Carrie Remer, JASG-C Office of Human Resource Management

Medical documents/LOD's - Prior to 18 September 2008, ensure medical documents for any treatment you have received at the TMC or CSH here in theater have been given to SSG Acosta in the HHC. It is critical that any LOD's (Line of Duties) are completed prior to leaving theater and this cannot be accomplished if you do not turn these documents into HHC.

Common Access Card (CAC) - Check your CAC to ensure the expiration date is after February 2009. If your card expires prior to then, stop by the HRM office in M-114 before departing theater and get a new card.

iPERMS/OMPF - Every Soldier should be checking their iPERMs (interactive Personnel Electronic Records Management System) Online account several times a year. iPERMS provides web-based access to your Official Military Personnel File. Your old 201 file/MPRJ is no longer your official record and is not maintained by JFHQ. So it is important that you check your iPERMs account occasionally to ensure your awards, OERs/NCOERs, DA 1059's (Service School Academic Evaluation Report), college transcripts, orders (promotion and mobilization) and DD 214's make it to your account. If you are currently missing documents from your OMPF, provide a copy to HHC so they can be scanned in and sent to JFHQ J-1. You can now log in with your CAC or use your AKO Username and Password. Go to <https://statepermsompf.hoffman.army.mil>

Within 90 days of redeploying, check iPERMs to ensure your awards, OER/NCOER, mobilization orders and your DD 214 have made it to your account. If these documents do not appear on your account, contact your Company S-1 office to ensure they are scanned to the JFHQ J-1 office for inclusion in your record.

Postal – Notify your family to stop sending personal mail NLT 20 September 2008. Also, come by the HRM office in M-114 before leaving theater and verify we have your current mailing address in case mail needs to be forwarded after we leave theater.

Here are a few things to know when preparing to ship items back home. *What are the size and weight limits to mail a package?* To mail a package, the size must be less than 108" for priority mail and 130" for Space "A" mail and the package must be less than 70 pounds for either service.

What is the difference between Priority and Space "A"? The difference is Priority will cost you more but will be expedited more quickly, as opposed to Space "A" which is a transportation category for military mail transported to and from overseas bases by air on a space-available basis.

How long will it take for a Priority or Space "A" package to arrive in the states? The average norm for Priority is 12 days. Space "A" can take 3-7 weeks.

Can I mail a suitcase, duffle bag or

a large rug? Yes, as long as it fits the size requirements. Army, Navy and Marines sending rugs, must be in a box.

What are normal everyday items that I can't send? Shaving Cream, cans of soda, perfume or cologne with alcohol, opened containers of food, aftershave, body spray (ex. AXE) mouthwash, foot spray, any other contents under pressure or any products containing any type of alcohol or other flammable material.

Does the Post Office have boxes to use other than priority boxes? We do not supply them, but when we do receive boxes, we place them under our inspection tables for the customers to use.

Where can I get larger boxes? The Dining Facility usually has a good supply of boxes to use.

Which customs form should I use? If you are mailing an item that is under \$400 in value and it is going back to the US, use the small green form, if it is over \$400 or going overseas, you must use the large white customs form. (Please have them filled out before arriving at the Post Office, and feel free to get as many as you need before hand).

What are the Post Office hours? The Embassy Post Office is open Sunday thru Friday 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and closed on Saturday. For letter class mail, the Post Office has a drop slot on the front right hand side of the Post Office and one in front of the Palace Mail Room pick-up area.



The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act

by Sgt. Muriel L. Irwin, JASG-C Office of the Judge Advocate General

It is a well known fact that National Guard and Reserve servicemembers experience many hardships during their deployments and extended tours. Leaving family members and friends for long periods of time can be an extremely stressful and returning home can be equally challenging. Returning National Guardsmen and Reservists may find going back to their places of employment problematic. Minimizing or eliminating this reemployment problem can be as easy as understanding the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

On October 13, 1994 USERRA was signed into law. The Act is intended to minimize the disadvantages to an individual that occur when that person needs to be absent from his or her civilian employment to serve in the uniformed services. The law seeks to ensure that those who serve their country can retain their civilian employment and benefits, and can seek reemployment free from discrimination because of their service. USERRA also requires that service members provide advance written or verbal notice to their employers for all military duty unless giving notice is impossible, unreasonable, or precluded by military necessity. Additionally, service members are able (but are not required) to use accrued vacation or annual leave while performing military duty.

Under the provisions set forth in USERRA returning servicemembers must be reemployed in the job that they would have attained had they not been absent for military

service (the long-standing “escalator” principle), with the same seniority, status and pay, as well as other rights and benefits determined by seniority. The Act also requires that reasonable efforts (such as training or retraining) be made to enable returning servicemembers to refresh or upgrade their skills to help them qualify for reemployment. In addition, this act also provides that while an individual is performing military service, he or she is deemed to be on a furlough or leave of absence and is entitled to the seniority rights accorded other individuals on non-military leaves of absence.

Under USERRA the cumulative length of time that an individual may be absent from work for military duty and retain reemployment is five years. There are important exceptions to the five year limit, including initial enlistments lasting more than five years, periodic National Guard and Reserve training duty and involuntary active duty extensions and recalls, especially during a time of National emergency. Reemployment protection does not depend on the timing, frequency, duration or nature of an individual’s service as long as the basic eligibility criteria are met.

Limits for returning to work depend, with the exception of fitness for service examinations, on the duration of a person’s military service:

Service of 181 or more days. An application for reemployment must be submitted no later than 90 days after completion of a person’s military service.

Injury or illness occurring or ag-

gravated during a period of service. The reporting or application deadlines are extended for up to two years from the date of completion of service for persons who are hospitalized or convalescing because of an injury or illness occurring or aggravated during a period of service.

For more information about U.S. Department of Labor employment and training programs for veterans, contact the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service office nearest you, listed in the phone book in the United States Government under the Labor Department or visit: <http://www.dol.gov/vets/aboutvets/contacts/main.htm>. The Department of Labor, through the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS), provides assistance to all persons having claims under USERRA, including Federal and Postal Service employees.

Sergeant Major’s column

Continued from page 2

also is a reflection on us. So take your time when developing your books, put effort in to preparing your plans, and prioritize important task for your replacement.

I am very proud of each and every one of you; stay focused and continue to push forward in completing our mission. When we get home I want each of us to be able to look back and know that we did our very best, during our time here and that we set our replacements up for success.

“ALWAYS FORWARD”

CSM J. Dean Bridges



COTRs are an important part of the contracting process

by Sgt. Shawn Riley, JASG-C Office of Public Affairs

Tucked into a little known office of the Joint Area Support Group-Central is a group of Servicemembers many of us rarely see, but the Soldiers there make a huge contribution to the mission. Master Sgt. Joel Wakefield, Staff Sgt. Ogbo Oku, Sgt. Jim Ledford and their supervisor Cpt. David Roys quietly ensure the contractors provide the Embassy Annex with

the adequate level of service and support. These Soldiers are Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (COTR). The COTRs are responsible for overseeing the services provided by the contractors and evaluating their performance. This process helps to determine what percentage of the contract bonuses the contractor is eligible to receive. Likewise, this helps to troubleshoot deficiencies in the contracting company's performance to improve overall service.

Wakefield is the COTR for Fuel and Laundry services. He makes monthly inspections to both facilities. Wakefield says "The COTR's responsibility is to monitor the contract requirements to make sure the contractors are meeting them and then report it to Defense Management Contract Agency." This is an important job for Wakefield. He monitors the fuel supply



Photo by Sgt. Shawn Riley, JASG Public Affairs
The COTR staff (left to right) Sgt. Jim Ledford, Staff Sgt. Ogbo Oku, Master Sgt. Joel Wakefield and Capt. David Roys pose in front of the Presidential Palace in Baghdad.

for the Embassy Annex and International Zone. The fuel point in the IZ is the largest retail point in Iraq. It needs to be because there

fuel is used in just about every aspect of life in the IZ. This includes over 200 generators 150 lights and hundreds of vehicles.

Oku and Ledford are COTRs for four dining facilities throughout the IZ. These DFACs include the Palace DFAC, Deli DFAC, Tigris DFAC and BESF DFACs. They must inspect all four DFACs every month. Ledford

says "We are not headcount." However, they do have the additional duty of supervising headcount operations.

Roys is the Acquisition Management Officer and the Officer in Charge of the COTRs. Roys says "We have 18 areas of oversight to include vehicles, food, fuel and laundry." He makes sure the reports are filled out and turned in on time. Roys is also responsible for sending all 18 of the reports to DCMA.

This team of COTRs and all of the COTRs throughout the Joint Area Support Group-Central work to maintain the standards of contracts that provide crucial service and support to Department and Defense and Chief of Mission personnel. With their watchful eye our food tastes great, our laundry is bright and clean and our vehicles and generators have fuel.

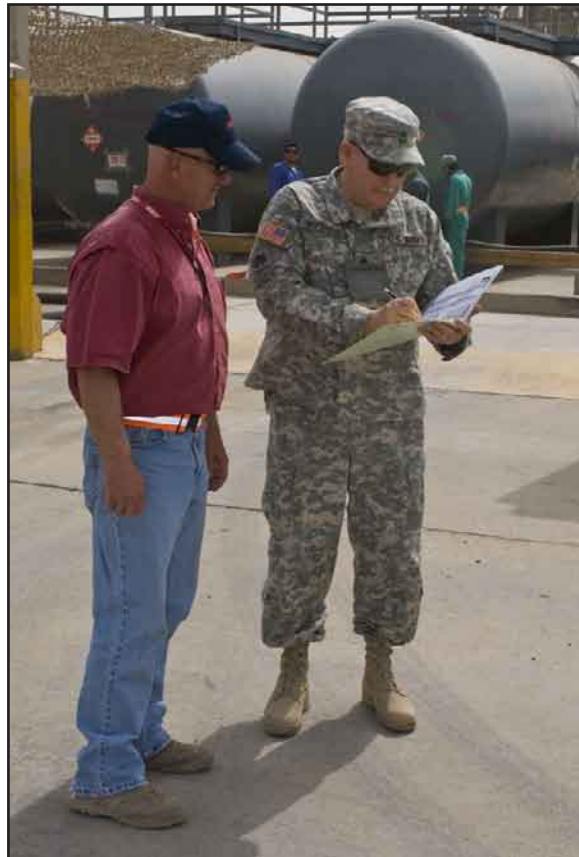


Photo by Sgt. Shawn Riley, JASG Public Affairs
Master Sgt. Joel Wakefield reviews some paperwork during an inspection of the fuel storage area.



Man's best friend

Continued from page 11

ditions they must face. Currently during the day the dogs stay in the vehicles with the air conditioning running to prevent overheating. However, the heat is still hard on the dogs, and from time to time they must be rotated out to allow them to get use to the conditions of Iraq and there are always two shifts of dogs that work the entry control points.

The explosive detection dogs are set to detect explosives on a passive sensor. When they determine that they have sensed the explosive, they will just sit down. Other dogs are trained to bark or scratch when they sense something. However, there could be problems when this happens. Since the dog is the front line defense, many times the enemy will attempt to kill them and the handler. To do this they will set the package to explode when the dog barks, and that is one of the reasons why they are trained not to bark. Other dogs are trained to scratch the area where they detect explosives; this can lead to the destruction of evidence needed to process the case. Therefore, it was determined that using a passive means of showing that an explosive was detected was wiser than showing an aggressive means.

The dogs are also placed on an aggressive training schedule. Daily they spend between two and three hours honing their skills. For the first test, Flum, the kennel master will take a small amount of explosive and place it in a 18 inch piece of PVC pipe. This pipe is mounted to a board and placed in line with three other pipes that look exactly the same. The pipe

with the explosive is randomly placed in the line of four and it is the dog's job to find the correct pipe. When the dog finds the correct pipe he is given a reward, which is usually his rubber play toy. The dogs get very excited when they get to play. Next four or five vehicles are lined up, just as they would be at the Entry Control Point. Somewhere on one of these vehicles a small amount of explosives is placed. Once again, it is the dog's responsibility to find the explosives. When he does, he is once again rewarded. There is also plenty of time for playing and grooming. At a minimum the dogs are played with for one hour a day and many times much more depending on the weather conditions and how the dog is feeling. The dogs are also groomed and bathed regularly to ensure they remain healthy and a vet is always available. When a dog does become ill, he stays with his handler in his room until he gets to feeling better. You may think that this is a huge pain, but on average a good explosive detection dog cost in excess of \$40,000.

The explosive detection dogs are very important to the security of the International Zone. Their job is to detect explosives before they reach the International Zone. So far the dogs and their handlers have done a great job as we have yet to have an incident where the explosives have gotten through the defenses and have been used against Coalition Forces. These dogs work hard and they play hard. They are man's best friend, and they are one of front line defenses for the International Zone.

215 Health Clinic

Continued from page 14

the challenge. No matter if it was rewiring the electrical or repairing a decrepit wall in the dentist offices, with the combined expertise and experience of Jones, DPW interpreter/engineer Mr. Jumaily Sabah and the IRS engineers the project was completed in a safe and timely manner. Jones would say, "Our job is to help you do your job and ensure it is up to DPW standards".

This project is a shining example of how DPW, the Iraqi government and Iraqi contractors are working to bring the Iraqi citizens toward a higher standard of living. This is just one example of the great things being done to improve the lives of local Iraqis and many more have been done and will be completed in the future. The next time a citizen of the IZ goes to the 215 clinic to get a routine check-up or maybe a root canal, they will see all of the hard work that went into the finished product. Projects like these only help to strengthen the ties between the American and Iraqi people. To quote an old military saying; "Job Well Done".

JASG-C Commanding General
Brig. Gen. Myles L. Deering

Public Affairs Officer
Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire

Duck & Cover Layout
Capt. Geoff Legler

Duck & Cover Staff
Sgt. Shawn Riley
Spc. Leslie Goble

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Your photos, Your memories

Photos shot by the members of the Joint Area Support Group - Central



Photo by Staff Sgt. Tara Winder



Photo provided by Sgt. Jim Ledford



Photo by Staff Sgt. James Barnett



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Stephanie Locksing



Photo by 2nd Lt. Lavonda Cathey



Photo by Master Sgt. Juan Gonzalez



Photo provided by Spc. Shea Weise



Photo by Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Marla Manyweather



Photo by provided by Mr. Furai



Promotions



Staff Sgt. John Hernandez
promoted to
Sergeant 1st Class



Staff Sgt. James Barnett
promoted to
Sergeant 1st Class

Fire rescue showcase

Continued from page 1

Fighter Organizations in Oklahoma and with Emergency Services in Chicago. “They train about 15 Iraqi fire fighters a month in explosive ordnance disposal and hazardous material disposal,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Scott, of Duncan.

“Working with Maj. Muneer, the IZ Fire Station chief, has been a rewarding experience and he has

taught me much about Iraqi culture and customs; he is a dedicated professional,” said Lt. Col. Phil Wynn, of Muskogee. The fire fighters train hard and risk their lives every day.

There are 39 fire stations in Baghdad with roughly 4,050 fire fighters. Since 2003 the number of fire stations has increased from 25 to 39; the number of firefighters from 920 to 4,050. The Iraqi civil defense agency continually works to build and train fire fighters to International Fire Fighter Standards. The

Baghdad fire fighters have acquired a great deal of new equipment since 2003. The Iraqi Civil defense agency has received new equipment from America, Japan, Austria and Germany replacing old and outdated equipment. The educational requirements to become a fire fighter have changed also requiring certificates from colleges of scientific

work. International companies have opened specialized courses in fire fighting and rescue to train fire fighters in Bahrain and Oman by global corporations such as PAE and the Americas.



Photo by Capt. Geoff Legler, JASG Public Affairs

Jawad Kazem al-Bolani (right), minister of the interior for Iraq, and Ahmed Ali al-Khafajdi (center), deputy minister of the interior for Iraq, listen to an Iraqi fire fighter as he explains the unique features of one of the department’s new fire trucks.



Photo by Capt. Geoff Legler, JASG Public Affairs
Iraqi fire fighters use a ladder truck to douse a roof-top fire during a fire fighting demonstration for Iraqi officials, Coalition Force representatives and members of the Iraqi media at their fire station in the International Zone.



JASG-C Birthdays August 15th to September 14th

Capt. Jeremy Bolyard
Command
August 24th

Sgt. 1st Class Michael Powell
HRM
August 31st

Staff Sgt. Harrison Wright
Badging
September 9th

Staff Sgt. James Barnett
Security
August 25th

Pfc. Lisa Olivas
Badging
September 1st

Lt. Col. Cary Bryant
Comptroller
September 13th

Spc. Johnnie Bennett
Security
August 26th

Sgt. 1st Class Wally Cooley
Installations
September 3rd

Maj. Kris Evans
Installations
September 13th

Maj. James Gill
Security
August 26th

Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Dannels
SPO
September 6th

Spc. Trisha Haynes
Security
September 13th

Sgt. 1st Class Lindsay Deline
Badging
August 30th

Lt. Col. Louis Gibson
Installations
September 8th

Lt. Col. Warren Griffis
Installations
September 14th

This week in National Guard history ***August 15, 1944***

Southern France — Operation DRAGOON, the Allied invasion staged on the French Riviera was conducted by three American infantry divisions making an assault landing between Nice and Marseilles. Two of these divisions, the 36th Infantry from Texas and 45th Infantry from Arizona, Colorado

and Oklahoma were Guard units largely composed of combat veterans having seen hard fight-

ing in Italy. The troops met little resistance and quickly moved inland to secure the road between Cannes and Frejus. Over the next few weeks they would drive north and by early September link up with American forces moving out of Normandy into central and eastern France.



The 45th Infantry Division goes ashore at Sainte-Maxime, Southern France, during Operation Dragoon. The formidable sea wall was built by the Germans to prevent a landing but Army engineers breached it.

